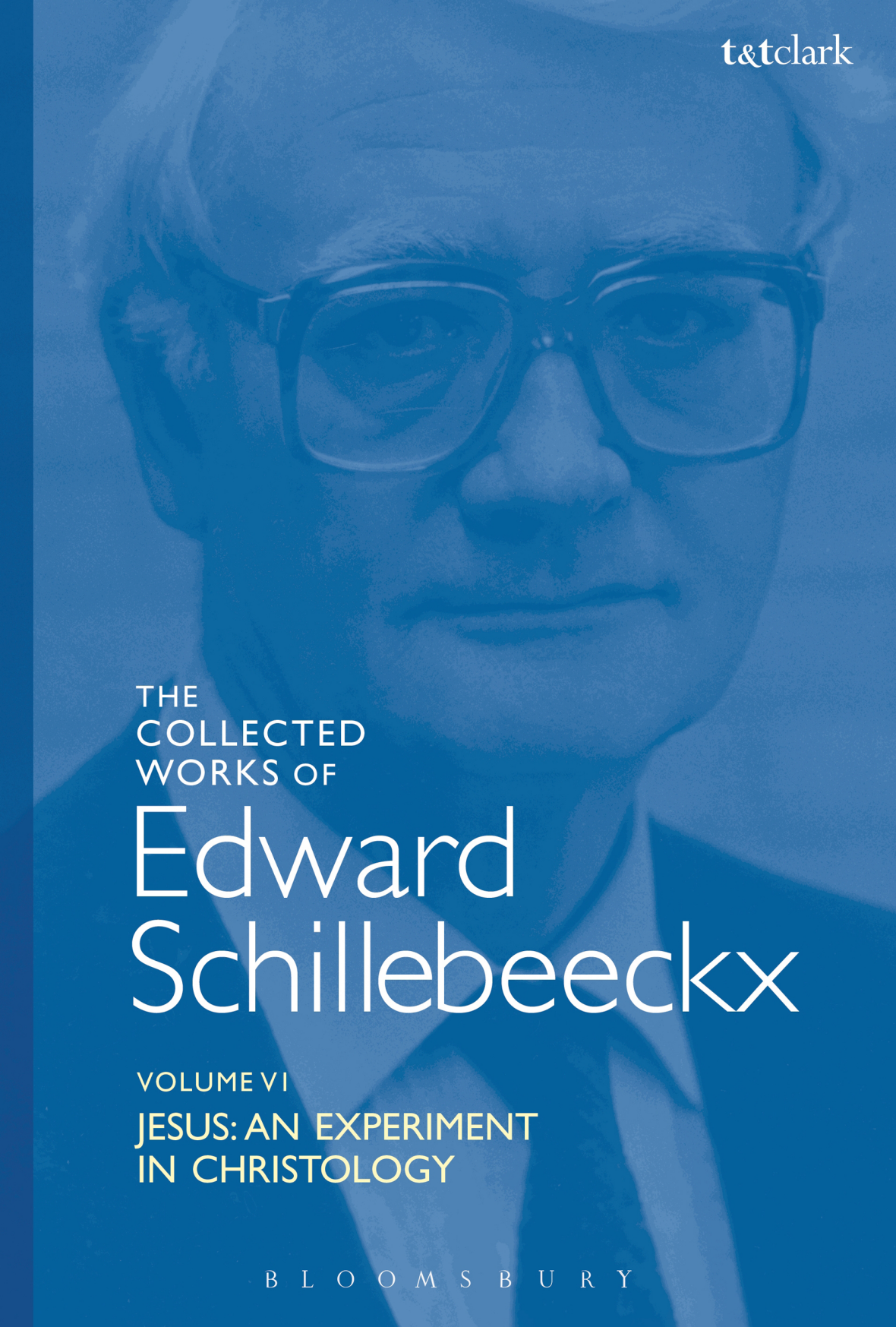

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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

Edward Schillebeeckx

VOLUME VI

JESUS: AN EXPERIMENT IN CHRISTOLOGY

BLOOMSBURY

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EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX

VOLUME VI

JESUS:
AN EXPERIMENT
IN CHRISTOLOGY

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Most secondary literature on *Jesus: an experiment in Christology* refers to the 1979 English edition. In this new version typing errors, spelling mistakes and numerous wrong or poor translations are corrected. Therefore we recommend that reference be made to this version in the future, though it would be a service to your readers if the page numbers of the old edition (added in square brackets in the margins) are mentioned as well. The text of this new edition should be considered as authoritative.

Please note that endnotes in the original 1979 edition are converted to footnotes (with different numbering) in this new edition.

Dedicated to all my readers
– known and unknown –
and especially
Bernard Cardinal Alfrink

'That you may not grieve as others do who have no hope'
(1 Thess. 4:13)

CONTENTS

Introduction to Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx xv

Introduction to the new edition 'Jesus: an experiment in Christology' xix

Foreword xxv

WHY THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN 1
I. The story of a crippled man 1
II. The situation in outline 2
III. A challenge 15
IV. Note on exegesis and theology 18

PART ONE: QUESTIONS OF METHOD, AND CRITERIA

Section One:
Jesus of Nazareth, norm and criterion of any interpretation of Jesus 25

Chapter 1:
The believer's historical access to Jesus of Nazareth 27
§1 Structure of the offer of salvation and the Christian response 27
A. The human person, focus of manifold relationships 27
B. Revelation and *'le croyable disponible'* 31
C. The constant unitive factor 35
D. Disharmony between Jesus and the New Testament 39
§2 Jesus of Nazareth, acclaimed as the Christ, object of historico-critical inquiry 44
A. Diverse images of Jesus and Jesus as 'object' of historical inquiry 45
B. Old and new: the critical approach 47
C. Modern historiography and Jesus of Nazareth 48
D. Theological significance of the historical quest for Jesus 51

Chapter 2:
Renewed need for a post-critical, narrative history 57

Section Two:
Criteria for a critical identification of the historical Jesus 61

§1 Background against which the historical criteria must be viewed: matrix of the various criteria 61

§2 Why then search for criteria to direct the sifting process? 65
§3 Cataloguing of valid, positive criteria 68
A. Redaction history as a criterion: traditions incorporated 'willy-nilly' 70
B. Criterion of form criticism: the principle of dual irreducibility 71
C. Tradition history as a criterion: principle of the 'cross-section' 74
D. Consistency of content as a criterion 75
E. Criterion of the rejection of Jesus' message and praxis 76
§4 Frequently employed but invalid criteria 77
§5 Note on the Q hypothesis 79

Section Three:
Justification for the structure of this book in terms of the method, hermeneutics and criteria discussed 83

PART TWO: 'THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST'
By way of introduction: *euaggelion* or good news 87

Section One:
What Jesus proclaimed and how he lived 95

Chapter 1:
Jesus' message of God's coming salvation 97
§1 Prophetic and apocalyptic penitential movements in Israel 98
§2 Message and praxis of John the Baptist 106
§3 Jesus' first prophetic act: his baptism by John 117
§4 Underlying impulse of Jesus' message and preaching 120
A. God's rule directed to humaneness: the kingdom of God 120
B. The praxis of the kingdom of God: Jesus' parables 133
C. Eschatological revolution: Jesus' beatitudes 149

Chapter 2:
Jesus' Praxis 157
§1 Jesus' caring and abiding presence among people experienced as salvation from God 157
A. 'Beneficent' reality (Mk. 7:37) of God's lordship, made present in Jesus' mighty acts 157
(a) Hermeneutic horizon of Jesus' miracles 158
(b) Jesus' miraculous freedom 'to do good' (Mk. 3:4) 160
(c) Jesus' call to faith in and return to God. Faith and mighty works 170
B. Jesus' liberating and joyous dealing with people: table fellowship with Jesus 175

(a) Existential impossibility of mourning in Jesus' presence: the 'non-fasting' of his disciples 176
(b) Jesus' liberating table fellowship with his circle and with 'outcasts', tax collectors and sinners 181
(i) Eschatological messenger of God's openness towards sinners 181
(ii) Jesus as host: a bounteous gift of God 188
C. Pre-Easter fellowship with Jesus of disciples who 'go after him' 193
§2 Man's cause as God's cause: the 'God of Jesus' 203
A. Jesus liberating mankind from a constricting view of God: Jesus and the Law 203
(a) Difficulty of exegetical research 204
(b) Q traditions and Markan traditions about 'Jesus and the Law' 206
(c) The cleansing of the temple 215
(d) The law as love of God and love of one's neighbour 220
B. Jesus' original *Abba* experience, source of his life's secret, message and praxis 227
Conclusion and definition of the problem: reality or illusion? 239

Section Two:
Kingdom of God, rejection and death of Jesus 241

Chapter 1:
Rejection and death of Jesus 243
§1 The death of Jesus as interpreted in early Christianity 243
A. The eschatological prophet-martyr: contrast scheme 244
B. The divine plan of salvation: salvation history scheme 251
C. A redemptive, atoning death: soteriological scheme 260
§2 The death of Jesus, viewed in the context of his earthly life 263
A. Rejection of Jesus' message and praxis 263
B. Jesus in the face of his approaching death 267
(a) Growing certainty of a violent death 267
(b) The unavoidable question of Jesus' own interpretation 269
(c) Logion of unconditional readiness to serve 271
(d) The last supper: unshaken assurance of salvation in the face of death 274
§3 Historical legal grounds for Jesus' execution 279

Chapter 2:
Jesus' last prophetic sign: his death left for others to interpret 285

Section Three:
The Christian story after Jesus' death: the kingdom of God takes on the appearance of Jesus Christ 287

Chapter 1:
The disciples scandalized by the arrest and execution of Jesus 289
§1 Historicity and superimposed interpretation in the gospels 289
§2 The disciples scatter and reassemble: the problem entailed 297

Chapter 2:
'Why do you seek the living among the dead?' (Lk. 24:5) 299
Introduction: local and official traditions of early Christianity 299
§1 Traditions centred on the Jerusalem site of the holy sepulchre 303
A. Mk. 16:1-8: apostolic resurrection *kerygma* in the context of the 'holy sepulchre' 303
B. Mt. 28:1-10: the Markan account transposed to a polemical context 307
C. Lk. 24:1-12: the Markan narrative in the context of the (Judaeo-) Greek 'rapture' model 309
D. Rekigious experience and eschatological religious terminology 313
§2 The official apostolic tradition: 'We believe that God raised him from the dead' (1 Thess. 1:10) 315
A. 'Jesus made himself seen' (1 Cor. 15:3-8) 315
(a) A unifying formula 315
(b) Manifestation, preaching and act of faith 320
B. 'Jesus showed himself to Peter and the Eleven' 321
C. 'On the road Paul saw the Lord' (Acts 9:27): the Damascus narrative (Acts 9:22, 26) 329
(a) Acts 9: the conversion vision 335
(b) Acts 22 337
(c) Acts 26 340

Chapter 3:
The Easter experience: being converted, at Jesus' initiative, to Jesus as the Christ − salvation found conclusively in Jesus 347
§1 An account of some converts. A Jewish conversion model? 347
§2 Jesus' disciples reassembled at the historical initiative of Peter 352
§3 The experience of grace as forgiveness 357
§4 Critical question: ambiguity of the term 'Easter experience' 359

PART THREE: CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF THE CRUCIFIED-AND-RISEN ONE

Section One:
The gospels: general hermeneutics of the risen Jesus 367

Chapter 1:
Early Christian movement centred on Jesus: different echoes of the one Jesus of Nazareth 369
§1 Taking stock of early Christian credal trends 369
§2 Early Christian creeds and their historical foundation in Jesus 370
A. *Maranatha* or parousia Christology: Jesus, bringer of the approaching salvation, Lord of the future and judge of the world 370
(a) Basic trend of this creed 371
(b) The creed in the tradition of the Q community 375
(c) The Lord of the future in Mark's Christology 382
B. *Theios anèr* Christology (?): Jesus the divine miracle worker. Christology of the Solomonic son of David 388
C. 'Wisdom' Christologies: Jesus, the messenger and teacher of wisdom; Jesus, pre-existent, incarnate, humbled yet exalted Wisdom 393
D. 'Easter' Christologies: Jesus, the crucified-and-risen one 396
Conclusion 400

Chapter 2:
First identification of the person: link between the earthly Jesus and the earliest Christian creeds 403
§1 Existing Jewish models of end-time saviour figures 404
A. The end-time prophet, 'filled with God's Spirit', who brings the good news of salvation to the oppressed: 'God's reign has begun' 404
B. The end-time messianic son of David 413
(a) National, dynastic 'Davidic messianism' 414
(b) Prophetic sapiential 'Davidic messianism' 419
C. The son of man 422
§2 The Christian 'first option' among existing Jewish models of end-time saviour figures 434
A. Early Christianity: a Jewish interpretation of Jesus 434
B. Jesus, presumed to be the end-time prophet 437
C. Jesus, the end-time messenger from God, source of the earliest credal strands and main source of the earliest Christian use of the titles Christ, the Lord, the Son 441
D. Christian prophetic/sapiential interpretation of Jesus as the messianic son of David and rejection of dynastic/Davidic messianism 459

Conclusion 473

Section Two:
Direct hermeneutics of the resurrection in the New Testament 475

Chapter 1:
'Raised from the dead' 477
§1 Late Jewish ideas about life after death 477
§2 It was God who raised him 'from the dead' 482
§3 'The third day he rose again according to the Scriptures': Jesus' resurrection as a conclusive eschatological event 485
Conclusion 490

Chapter 2:
Resurrection, exaltation, sending of the Spirit. The parousia 493
Conclusion 503

Section Three:
From a 'theology of Jesus' to a Christology 505

Chapter 1: Theology 'raised to the second power' 507

Chapter 2: Growing reflection in the New Testament traditions 513

Section Four:
Post-New Testament reflection in the early church: christological dogma 521
Conclusion of Part Three and definition of the problem 532

PART FOUR: WHO DO WE SAY THAT HE IS

Section One:
The present christological crisis and its presuppositions 537

Chapter 1:
'Conjunctural' hermeneutic horizon of ideas and a-synchronous rhythm in the complex transformation of a culture 539

Chapter 2:
The break with tradition since the Enlightenment 545
§1 Lessing's view against the background of the Enlightenment 545
§2 Contemporary 'christological' tendencies in the wake of the Enlightenment 547
§3 Acknowledged and tacit assumptions 549
§4 Universality via historically particular mediation 552

Section Two:
A 'universal hermeneutic horizon' not amenable to theorizing 557

Chapter 1:
Unique universality of a historically particular human being 559
§1 The concept of 'human transcendence' 559
§2 Unique universality: universal appeal of 'what is worthy of man' 565
A. Definition of the problem 565
B. The *humanum* we seek 568
C. The human and the religious 569
Conclusion 573

Chapter 2:
The history of human suffering in search of meaning and liberation 575
§1 The problem of 'universal history' 575
§2 Impossibility of theorizing ultimate meaning and of a universal hermeneutic horizon 579

Section Three:
Jesus, parable of God and paradigm of humanity 587

Chapter 1:
God's saving action in history 589
§1 Historical discourse and discourse in religious language 589
§2 Revelation or God's salvation-historical acts as experienced and articulated in religious language 591
A. God's creative activity in our world: 'human person' and 'being of God' 591
B. God's saving activity in history 595
C. God's definitive saving acts in history 596

Chapter 2:
The christological problem 599
§1 Definitive salvation-in-Jesus imparted by God 599
A. *God's* message in Jesus 599
B. Salvation in Jesus or in the risen crucified one? 602
C. Intrinsic significance of Jesus' resurrection for salvation 605
§2 The necessity, difficulty and limits of a theoretical christological identification of the person 610
§3 In search of the basis of Jesus' *Abba* experience: soul of his message, life and death, and disclosure of the mystery of his life 612

Chapter 3:
Theoretical Christology, story and praxis of the kingdom of God 629
Epilogue: postscript to the story of the crippled man 632

Technical information 635
A. Explanation of some technical and unfamiliar terms 635
B. Abbreviations 654
C. Pseudepigrapha (or non-canonical intertestamentary literature) 655
D. Sigla employed (periodicals, dictionaries, series) 656
E. Bibliographical index of subjects 658
F. Index of authors 660

Introduction to

COLLECTED WORKS OF EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX

Without a doubt Prof. Mag. Dr Edward Schillebeeckx O.P. (1914-2009) is one of the most creative and influential theologians of the 20th and 21st century. His work has been much discussed and is still widely popular in academic and pastoral circles. Schillebeeckx played a major role in theological and ecclesiastic renewal. His academic studies and scholarly pastoral books, sermons and lectures continue to inspire a wide reading public. His considerable authority as a scholar is based on extensive knowledge of the Christian tradition coupled with compassionate involvement with people and movements in church and society, especially those who are exposed to injustice and suffering.

A theologian of such exceptional stature in the Dutch language area certainly deserves enduring public attention. In 2004, therefore, on the occasion of Schillebeeckx's 90th birthday, the Edward Schillebeeckx Foundation made the first moves for the publication of his collected works. Extensive discussion followed on just what kind of publication we envisaged: a complete and comprehensive overview of his work, a critical edition of his monographs, an annotated reissue of his most innovative works and/or a selective republication of articles, including reflection on their reception. The preparatory committee − consisting of Dick Boer, Erik Borgman, Wil Derkse, Stephan van Erp, Mijke Jetten, Kristanto Budiprabowo, Frans Maas, Robert Schreiter, Ted Mark Schoof O.P., Nico Schreurs and Carl Sterkens – was soon confronted with a major problem: the sheer volume of Schillebeeckx's work. He was a very prolific writer indeed. This is borne out by the updated version of Schillebeeckx's bibliography, compiled and published by Ted Schoof and Jan van de Westelaken, which can be found on the foundation's website: www.schillebeeckx.nl. A publication of his complete works, therefore, seemed virtually impossible. Some of them had been published in one language only (mostly Dutch, but also German and French), while translations, though usually meticulously checked by or on behalf of the author, at times differed

somewhat from the original. Because of practical concerns like financial constraints and the limited availability of translations we confined ourselves to a re-publication of Schillebeeckx's major works – still a daunting endeavour.

For similar reasons we decided not to republish the original Dutch texts but only translations, although we realize that not even the best translation can adequately convey the often subtle nuances and delicate shades of meaning of the original. Various misunderstandings at Schillebeeckx's much publicized 'conversation' with Vatican authorities on Christology in 1980 illustrate this risk. It seemed logical to choose translations which would be accessible to the extensive Anglophone world. Fortunately quite a number of good translations of Schillebeeckx's publications were available. Nonetheless a great deal of the *Collected Works* were revised once more, both linguistically and substantively. The translations of volumes 1 to 5 did not require checking: that had already been done at the time of the publication of the English versions (between 1963 and 1974) by Schillebeeckx's fellow brother and assistant at the time, Ted Schoof, who, before concluding his theological education with Edward Schillebeeckx in Nijmegen, had followed the regular theology course of four years at Blackfriars, Oxford. Of the volumes 6, 7 and 11 the as yet untranslated parts were either translated or edited by Marcelle Manley. This applies particularly to volume 11, most of which now appears in English for the first time, but also to a new section in volume 7 (*Christ. The Christian experience in the modern world*). As for volume 6 (*Jesus: An experiment in Christology*), the (somewhat laboured) original translation by Hubert Hoskins was edited by Sr Joanna Dunham, and subsequently thoroughly revised and re-edited by Marcelle Manley, in such depth that she should be mentioned as co-translator. The substantive accuracy of John Bowden's original translations of volumes 7 to 10 was checked by Ted Schoof. Hence they are now published as 'authorized' versions. Volume 9 (*The church with a human face*) required such extensive terminological corrections that the earlier translation can no longer be considered reliable. In each volume the section 'How to use this book' synoptically outlines a format for references to the text.

Although many linguistic and substantive changes were introduced, we did not opt for gender-inclusive language. Present-day translations would undoubtedly have used this style, but for the sake of maximum fidelity to the original text, and for the practical reason that the English versions of volumes 1 to 5 did not require checking, we decided not to do so.

These *Collected Works* include Schillebeeckx's unquestionably major theological works. We chose them for their historical significance, theological relevance and impact on developments in theology and church communities. It was no coincidence that these works were mostly out of print. In the *Collected Works* each volume will have a short introduction providing a brief sketch of

its background, context and relevance.

The Edward Schillebeeckx Foundation is proud to present Schillebeeckx's most influential works in one readily available series. We thank the Flemish and Dutch provinces of the Dominican Order for making this publication possible. We hope its readers' enjoyment of these works will be as great as our appreciation of the support we received.

Prof. Dr Nico Schreurs
Chairman, Edward Schillebeeckx Foundation

Introduction to the new edition

JESUS
AN EXPERIMENT IN CHRISTOLOGY

Jesus: an experiment in Christology is certainly the most important of all Edward Schillebeeckx's books. It is a milestone in Catholic theology as regards both method and content. Even now its significance has not been adequately assessed and analysed.

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) the book was written at a key point in Catholic theology. With a view to the renewal of belief, inside the church, ecumenically and in the secular sphere, Schillebeeckx proposed a revision of theological methods and goals. Scripture was to become the soul of theology and of preaching once more (Vatican II, Const. *Dei Verbum*, 24), while still maintaining the great theological tradition. This was an enormous programme and, after initial discussions, it became clear that the first thing to consider afresh was what to believe about Jesus Christ – which more than ever, for insiders and outsiders alike, forms the core of Christian identity. The neo-scholastic theology of the preceding decades did not think historically and was adamantly anti-Modernist. *La nouvelle théologie*, developed in France, did a lot of spadework. In a re-engagement with Thomas Aquinas and the church fathers it won new respect for Christian experience and spirituality. However, it never came close to consistent, contemporary biblical exegesis.

Origin of the book. – Only very few of his colleagues joined Edward Schillebeeckx, theological advisor to Cardinal Alfrink of Utrecht and the Dutch episcopacy during the Council, in pursuing the new kind of thinking that was newly required in the space between the poles of Scripture and modern secularity. He had no illusions, either during the Council or afterwards, about the magnitude of this challenge. Above all, in the first years after the Council the christological question dominated discussions at countless meetings, especially the annual meetings of the directors of the journal *Concilium*.

The paths that led to the book are wide, manifold and comprehensive. As a young lecturer in Leuven Edward Schillebeeckx was acknowledged as a

distinguished scholar of dogmatic history and Thomas Aquinas. Then, as far back as 1963, he engaged intensively with John Robinson's book, *Honest to God*. Schillebeeckx showed the first signs of his own conception of hermeneutics in an article on Paul Ricoeur in 1968 and in subsequent articles with linguistic themes in *Tijdschrift voor Theologie*, the Dutch journal that he founded. From 1968 onwards he regularly lectured on theological hermeneutics in the theology faculty at Nijmegen. It followed naturally from the synthesizing and richly constructive character of his thinking that, from the outset, he relates questions of formal and material hermeneutics, of linguistics and of history, to one another.

However, with this equipment alone Schillebeeckx could never have written this book: he still lacked one branch of knowledge, which Catholic theology had long left under the filter of dogmatic Christology. The focus was on the extremely subtle methods and results of historical-critical exegesis, also in synchronic linguistic exegesis, approaches which had emerged since the 19th century and had gained important insight into crucial systematic questions. Meanwhile exegetical discourse generally also led to unexpected, theologically and anthropologically relevant alternatives, directly affecting contemporary understanding of faith, Christ and God. Think only of Bultmann and his disciples. Slogans like 'the historical Jesus' and 'demythologization', 'miracle' and 'empty tomb' became the writing on the wall, against which Catholic dogma seemed to be on guard. How urgent these questions still are is evident in the spate of polemics which the books about Jesus by Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) triggered as recently as 2010. To these questions Schillebeeckx worked out his own exegetically well substantiated, often original answers, showing his competence as an exegete.

According to his own account it took him three years − at least from 1969 to 1971 − not counting daily exegetical work needed for lectures, addresses and sermons. The enormous number of texts he mastered is evidenced by the bibliographies, not only of this but also of the following volume, *Christ: the Christian experience in the modern world* (Dutch 1977, English 1980): nothing published by biblical scholars at the time remained unexamined. Among the greatest achievements of this book is the skilful way in which he penetrates the firewall between exegesis and dogmatics. In this respect it parallels *On being Christian* by Hans Küng (written at exactly the same time) and *Jesus Christ liberator* by Leonardo Boff, excelling them, however, in minuteness of detail as regards both method and content.

Hermeneutical-exegetical approach. – Of course Schillebeeckx's achievement does not consist only in his formal reflections on exegesis, history and theology (41-80). Like Küng, he became a learner again as recommended by Vatican II. He learnt the craft of biblical exegesis, worked his way through mountains of

exegetical literature on first-hand interpretation of texts, on the history of the period, on the backgrounds in sociology of culture and politics, on oral reports committed to writing, their redactions, their early tradition, and on the complexities of the reception of modern exegesis. Finally he came up against the extremely sensitive and complicated questions about the historically conditioned, changing images of Jesus, the special methodological and substantive problems raised by the 'historical Jesus', and what has by now emerged as the broad consensus in biblical scholarship. Thus Schillebeeckx could finally speak competently – as an exegete among exegetes – about literally every gospel pericope (the exegesis of other New Testament books will follow in the next volume). This is an extraordinary achievement, even today, among Catholic systematic theologians. It is this penetration of firewall that ultimately explains the radical revolution in his Christology (as in Küng's and Boff's). Here the split between dogmatic and 'positive' theology is overcome, both programmatically and across a wide range of christological claims.

That split has existed in the Catholic context since 1679 when the first critical exegetical work by Richard Simon was burnt on dogmatic grounds, a theological catastrophe which was never repaired. Even today it is asserted in prominent publications that a really critical exegesis cannot comply with dogmatic demands. Readers of Schillebeeckx's book may be persuaded of exactly the opposite. In the anti-Modernist years (1864-1962) the hostility to exegesis took on downright scurrilous features. Well meant more popularising books about Jesus (Karl Adam, Romano Guardini, F.M. Willam, Giovanni Papini and Daniel-Rops) never attained a high level of biblical scholarship. Even after advances based on the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) Catholic exegesis remained burdened by anxiety that it might undervalue or damage dogmatically binding statements. Even great thinkers like Karl Rahner never really succeeded in penetrating the world of biblical scholarship. In short, nobody knew how one should reach back, biblically, beyond the conciliar statements of the 4th and 5th centuries without losing sight of them.

In the early 1970s, then, Schillebeeckx found himself equipped with the necessary tools to take on this momentous project. It was not simply a 'Christology from below', as he himself said: even this approach presupposes a stringent hermeneutic standpoint. Schillebeeckx describes it as 'an ecclesial or collective experience which obliges people to define the ultimate meaning and purport of their lives in reference to Jesus of Nazareth' [56].

Ultimately, in the memories that have been written down, he is questioning Jesus' all-bearing identity or – if you will – Jesus' divine secret, which is to be found not in a transcendent beyond but in his life and death. Guided by this general perspective Schillebeeckx could pursue without constraint a historical-critical interpretive approach 'from below': the words, deeds and destiny of

Jesus are reconstructed on the broadest basis according to strict scholarly criteria.

Positioning this book. – Despite the massive mistrust Schillebeeckx had to face to the end of his life, the orthodoxy of this work remains incontestable, and despite repeated attempts it was never censured or condemned by the Magisterium. But the far-reaching religious and spiritual revolution accomplished in this Christology is indisputable. Understandably, it evoked fierce resistance. Now the human in Jesus no longer functions as an illustration of the divine as it used to do; rather, Jesus' words, deeds and destiny themselves become the presence of the divine. Those who see Jesus see the Father, not the other way round. Thus Schillebeeckx seeks not God himself, who always remains mediated and invisible, but rather Jesus' lived and suffered experience of God, which is in its turn universally relevant: 'We are required to be open to Jesus' own interpretive experience of the reality of God which he manifests in his humanity' [604]. 'On the other hand religious statements must have some basis in the history of Jesus; if not, they would be unrelated to reality and therefore ideological' [605].

At the same time Schillebeeckx moves away from the metaphysical categories of classical Christology. Note, he never rejected them, nor ever denied their truth. But for three reasons he relativizes them: (a) All truth is mediated through determinate relationships and thought forms, and thus must on occasion also be mediated through others [48-52]. (b) Greek metaphysics has done great things for Christology, yet has come to show serious limitations [557-582]. (c) From our present viewpoint the biblical message of Jesus is concealed rather than protected by classical Christology. Schillebeeckx makes this particularly clear in his supplementary reflections on the resurrection [644-650].

Thus the biblical sources contain no objective statements on the Jesus question which would be valid in themselves. Rather they need to be articulated by all available methods: to be translated, tested as regards their interactions, motivations and intentions, and integrated with their cultural, social and political contexts. According to this conception truth is always mediated, living and interactive; it is never static, it takes shape especially in experiences of suffering (as a universal phenomenon). This pluralism does not lead to some directionless relativism, as some people like to suggest but, on the contrary, to richness, which in a changed reality always also finds a new language.

As emerges clearly in the complex reflections on the resurrection [320-397] the key category of the book is 'experience', of course not in an empiricist or romantic sense, as if it had to do with subjective emotions and affectivity, but in a specifically hermeneutic sense. Schillebeeckx understands experience

(such as the experience of the resurrection) as the locus of an active, present truth, which is also testable and communicable. It manifests itself in the endless complexity of action and suffering, memory and hope, texts and contexts, which constantly create ever new action and suffering, new communication and new texts in changed contexts. Those who seek to analyse all this and articulate it in new ways start a process which can never be concluded. Thus Schillebeeckx never gives the impression that he has completed his christological project with this or the following book. This book is no more than a 'prolegomenon': 'This book is a prolegomenon … not because of what is actually said in it, but because of what had been my original intention: to offer a synthetic view of the contemporary problem of "redemption" and "emancipation" or man's self-liberation, partly with "liberation theology" in mind' [35]. In the introductory 'situation in outline' [19-33] Schillebeeckx acknowledges the multi-layered operations to which this approach leads.

Reception and permanent significance. – Did the book attain its goal, then, and does it today? Initially the effect was immense, for it gave answers to precisely the questions that were being discussed by Christians inside and outside the Catholic Church. Certainly, amid all the revolutionary changes, faith in Jesus Christ remained uncontested to the extent that people sought the core and the criterion of Christian belief. Yet traditional doctrine, the christological language of the early councils and its interpretations in the catechisms were increasingly experienced as unintelligible, as the product of far distant times and as dictates of authority. This book offered an extremely nuanced treatment, which took the acknowledged problems seriously and offered possibilities for innovative reflection and formulations. The book also reached many sceptics, since it is written for readers to whom 'God', 'Son of God' or 'saviour of the world' are no longer self-evident concepts. These concepts had first to be re-disclosed to them on the basis of the figure of Jesus. In addition to the original Dutch version (1974) the book appeared in German (1975), Italian (1976), English (1979) and Spanish (1981). There followed a partial translation into Japanese. There are fourteen known dissertations on the author's Christology, nearly all of them written in the 1980s.

However, many theologians, students and believers have read the book only very selectively, for it is primarily addressed to professional theologians. Its treatment of problems is extremely complex and its language is always demanding. It switches, often and almost without noticing, between the technical language of exegetes and historians, philosophers and sociologists, historians of doctrine and even liturgists. That makes all the more precious the countless passages in which the deep, faithful and actually easily understandable spirituality of the author becomes transparent, as well as his

great skill in synthesis.

In regard to the extreme complexity one further feature is to be noted. In the general theological consciousness people have certainly taken on board the great intentions of the work: here is someone taking the Christ message of the gospels without dressing it up; he is telling the story of Jesus. However, the demanding distinctions and vast body of theological reflection were only taken on board in a very limited way. In this sense one can speak of a trite, stereotypical reception in the minds of many believers. Added to this is the – saddening – fact that many anxiously orthodox theologians dare not cite a book by this 'dangerous' because disturbing author. Even the demanding books about Jesus by Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) are relativized quite considerably by this gap. On the other hand it must be clear: in this day and age the christological questions which this book discusses so comprehensively can no longer be repressed, nor simply replaced, let alone vanquished, by neo-conservative conceptions. To keep abreast of present-day christological problems one must come to terms with this ever young book.

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FOREWORD

Although I regard this book as a Christian interpretation of Jesus − a [005]
Christology, however unconventional it may be − it was not written to resolve the sometimes very subtle problems that interest the academic theologian. Not that these are unimportant. But the fact is that believers are raising questions about Christ which are not ones that normally preoccupy academics. I have tried to bridge the gap between academic theology and the concrete needs of ordinary Christians or, more modestly, to shed some light on the nexus of problems presaging that gap and giving rise to the questions that seem most urgent to ordinary Christians. Even so, this calls for a certain amount of academically disciplined work and theological reflection that takes very seriously the demands of both faith and critical thinking.

The book is written in such a way that the contents should be accessible to any interested reader.[1] Some effort may well be needed to follow (in Part Three) the sometimes complicated development of the − initially Jewish − interpretation of Jesus by Christians (from his death up to and including the writing of the New Testament). However, those who fancy reading this or that chapter because it may be of special interest to them are missing the essential point; for the whole was composed to enable readers as it were to share in the process whereby full-fledged Christian belief − including their own − came into being. Picking and choosing among the chapters or reading them in a different order will rob the book of its inner dynamics.

This book is only part of a more extensive christological study. The second book examines Pauline and Johannine doctrine in particular, concentrating on the various Christologies of the New Testament itself. The first book, therefore, is a 'Jesus book', not altogether ignoring the Christ; whereas the second is a 'Christ book', with due reference to Jesus of Nazareth.

It is up to the reader to judge whether this approach is successful or not; and on that score reasoned criticism of any sort is most welcome.

Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P.

[1] Theological jargon has been avoided as much as possible; but it seemed impossible at times to do without it. Therefore definitions of certain technical terms are provided at the back of the book.

WHY THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN

I. THE STORY OF A CRIPPLED MAN

We have all seen him, have we not? Day after day, always at the same old pitch, more or less unnoticed by people hurrying by, who still, sometimes with an air of boredom or surprise, sometimes with a friendly nod, will toss him a coin as they go on their way. There he squats in his small corner, alone, the familiar village cripple. So it has ever been. 'And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at that gate of the temple which is called Beautiful to ask alms of those who entered the temple' (Acts 3:2). The day came when Peter, one of the Nazarene's following, noticed him sitting there. There was an exchange of words between them. The next thing people saw was their neighbourhood cripple fully restored and walking as well as anyone. They recognized him as the one who sat begging for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; 'and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him' (Acts 3:10). Then − so Luke tells us – Peter, having first addressed the people, said to the Jewish authorities who had afterwards chosen to concern themselves with the affair: '... be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well. .. *And there is salvation in no one else,* for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:10,12).[1] [017]

In that – among early Christian writings − not even very early text of Acts we nevertheless hear an echo of early Christianity. When Luke's book of Acts has been critically dissected we are still within our rights to detect in this passage at least some resonance of early Christian proclamation, which Peter − after the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, and then only after many misgivings − felt himself permitted, nay, obliged to avow and to address to his fellow Jews: that salvation from God is given to us Jews, and therewith – although this only became clear later on − to all people, simply and solely in Jesus the Nazarene; which is to say, in the language of the New Testament, the crucified-but-risen one. That Petrine profession of belief, which in the end and on the basis of their

[1] '*Must* be saved'; in New Testament usage this 'must' signifies: the living God has provided for this, it is his divine plan for men's salvation. Hence the rendering: 'according to God's plan of salvation'.

own experience 'the Twelve' unanimously affirmed − albeit, as Scripture itself
[018] emphasizes, not without the same kind of initial doubts − actually *made* history. The Christian churches of today and even outsiders, right up to and including contemporary Jesus people who still find an experience of salvation in this Jesus after the lapse of so much time (though not without the mediating function of the churches down the centuries), are still living witnesses among us to Jesus of Nazareth and what he initiated. Without the historical factor of the church and its mediating role we today (except for a few specialist historians) would know nothing of one Jesus of Nazareth. Apart from a number of privileged historians, nobody, as things stand today, wants to bear testimony to the quite justifiably rebellious slave Spartacus, or to that grim critic of the religious culture of his time, John the Baptist. This striking difference, if not absolutely conclusive, is historically of exceptional importance. It is an arresting fact and it makes one think: What goes on here? Why this difference in aftereffect between one historical figure and another?

What strikes me especially about the vague echo to be heard here of early Christian catechesis is not that an individual − Jesus of Nazareth − had been (in the firm opinion of his disciples) unjustly put to death. In those harsh times − typical, it might seem, of the whole of human history − one problematic execution among so many was in no way remarkable. Such an event − a 'mere incident' in the daily annals of the time, which despite Acts 26:26[2] took place in an obscure and remote corner of what was then the *oikoumene* or 'whole inhabited world' − would appear to have attracted little or no attention in those days. Such instances were legion. But what did give Peter – Simon and his fellows − pause for thought was the fact that of all people this one, Jesus of Nazareth, had been done to death by all that passed for, and indeed was, the governing authority. The impression Jesus had made and the notion which Simon and company had formed of him did not square at all with the ultimate fate meted out to him by the governing power: to be handed over by his co-religionists to the Roman occupier, who sent him to a criminal's death by crucifixion. This simply did not accord with the impression Jesus had made on many of them as Jews. That is really the gist of what has since come to be known in the Christian tradition as the 'christological problem'.

[019] II. THE SITUATION IN OUTLINE

1. However much conditioned by historically concrete situations, it is individuals' capacity actually to 'make history' that provides us with a hermeneutic key to their identity. Through the movement generated by Jesus we are confronted here and now with Jesus of Nazareth. The movement which

[2] 'For this was not done in a corner' (Acts 26:26).

he set afoot remains the medium for any approach to the historical Jesus event. For me, a believer as well as a thinking person, this fact gives pause for thought, as it does for anyone who reflects without prejudice on what has actually happened in his own intimate history.

This historical process triggered by Jesus will engage our minds all the more as it becomes clear that, within two or three years after Jesus' death by execution, what have since come to be known as christological confessions of faith had already crystallized, and especially as the historical fact emerges that only three years after his death a certain Pharisee, Saul by name, became a Christian convert during his travels in pursuit and persecution of Jesus' adherents − near Damascus, which implies that there was already a fellowship of Christians in Syria at that time.[3] History shows that, within the space of five years or less, the effective rudiments of a new world religion were ready to hand: a quite extraordinary phenomenon.

All the same, this development confronts us with an extremely complex process: a story of people who found salvation, explicitly qualified as 'from God', in Jesus of Nazareth, whom they came to describe − when faced in the context of their expectant hope with this concrete historical manifestation − as 'the Christ, son of God, our Lord'.

Ideas and expectations of salvation and human happiness are invariably projected from within concrete experience and the pondered fact of calamity, pain, misery and alienation − from within negative experiences accumulated through centuries of affliction, with here and there the fleeting promise of a happier lot, fragmentary experiences of wellbeing in a story, stretching from generation to generation, of hopes unfulfilled, of guilt and evil: the 'Job's problem' of human history. Hence there eventually emerges an anthropological projection, a vision of what is held to be the true, good and happy mode of human life. This is why the human craving for happiness and wellbeing, always being submitted to critical judgement yet again and again surviving every critique, inevitably acquires − in diverse forms − the pregnant [020] nuance of 'release from' or 'deliverance out of' and, at the same time, of entering into a 'completely new world'. Thus the negative experiences of mankind contrast with and help to delineate a people's positive notions and expectations of salvation, wellbeing. From its conceptions of salvation one can, so to speak, glean the story of a people's sufferings, even when it is no longer possible to trace in other sources the precise course of those sufferings.

The striking thing about this process of ominous and also partly benign experiences is that the distinctive ideas a people have about 'salvation' are attempts to probe and interpret, not only the depth and unbounded extent of

[3] M. Hengel, 'Christologie und neutestamentliche Chronologic, in *Neues Testament und Geschichte* (O. Cullmann on his 70th birthday) (Zürich-Tübingen 1972), 45-67.

hardship, suffering, evil and death, endured and enduring, but also their causes, origin and effects. Where salvation is hoped for, it is in the express form of this expectation that evil and suffering are unmasked: in them both are put on exhibition. In the ancient world − but also in the spontaneous experience of every people − each such experience of adversity is invariably assigned a religious dimension because of the human, theoretically bottomless and practically irremovable depths of suffering involved. It is felt instinctively that, whether in theory or in practice, the ill is not to be contained within a merely human frame of reference. And so when people looked for salvation their hope was given a religious name. Reaching above and beyond themselves, they learned to expect that this good must come 'from God'. They looked for mercy and compassion at the very heart of reality, despite every contrary experience.

From a specifically historical viewpoint, for both Jew and gentile, Jesus' time was full to bursting with an assortment of hopes regarding some good thing to come, in the form of a welter of ideas culled from long centuries of fleeting promise and, more especially, of many unfulfilled expectations. The period of Jewish apocalypticism above all, from the Maccabean struggle (167 BC) and the Jewish War (AD 66-70) to Bar Kochba (AD 135), was a 'story of blood and tears',[4] from which the yearning grew: 'Enough is enough: the world must be changed − positively and radically changed!' In images difficult for us to fathom today these beatific hopes were grandly elaborated upon in apocalyptic visions. Via many and various detours of tradition and through 'international' contact with different trends and schools of thought in those days, divergent expectations of what was to come were collated. A contamination emerged of various kinds of expectations of good, quite separate in origin: a process historically so complex that it has become very hard for us to disentangle the
[021] several strands of tradition in any detail.

Within this general mood of expectancy, containing in Jesus' time the still highly active process of fusing together so many diverse ways of envisaging 'salvation', a living confrontation with Jesus of Nazareth convinced some that 'in no one else is redemption given'. Those first Christians articulated what they experienced as salvation-in-Jesus, coming from God, in entrenched images and concepts of varied origin, with which they themselves strongly concurred. These expectations they now saw fulfilled: in Jesus of Nazareth. For they felt that they were new people. In the New Testament they testified − at any rate after a few generations of Christian living and reflection upon it − to recognizing salvation-in-Jesus, at the same time extending to it their erstwhile ideas and hopes of salvation-to-come. In the gospels, therefore, it is impossible

[4] M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (Tübingen 1973[2]), 354.

to differentiate between their own expectation as such and their joyful acknowledgment of its being fulfilled in Jesus: the two strands are more or less inextricably intertwined. The question about the true nature of man and the discovery of its answer in the historical person of Jesus are correlative, at least in the sense that it is not the prior expectations that determine who Jesus is, but the other way round: starting from the peculiar and quite specific historical existence of Jesus, the existing expectations are partly assimilated, of course, yet at the same time transformed, reappraised or corrected. This indicates both continuity and discontinuity between people's questions about salvation and the historically concrete answer that is Jesus.

For us, therefore, a first reading of the New Testament presents some major difficulties. We do not live in a religio-cultural tradition that expects a messiah or a mysterious, celestial son of man; nor do we live in expectation of an imminent end of the world. The gospels confront us not just with Jesus of Nazareth but with a section of ancient religious culture. Jesus is indeed hidden beneath religious ideas belonging to that time, ideas which, if it comes to that, were not altogether alien to him – in fact, the opposite. Moreover, the original experience of salvation in Jesus is amplified in the gospels with doctrinal and practical problems of the later Christian congregations which, though initially within the Jewish fraternity (alongside many others), had gradually become detached from Judaism and were keeping up a polemic against the synagogues run by the Pharisees, while the Jews in their turn formally dissociated themselves from the Christian phenomenon in their midst, denounced it and [022]
placed an interdict upon it as being no longer authentically Jewish, and therefore 'outside the synagogue'[5] In the gospels Jesus of Nazareth has, so to speak, vanished into the background of the polemic between 'Israel' and 'the church', a problem which Jesus had never encountered in that form and perhaps had never intended. The fact is that the 'phenomenon of Jesus' shattered the hopes of salvation held in common by Jews and those Jews later known as Christians; and because of Jesus' unconventional conduct such hopes acquired a discontinuous, no longer traditional meaning. What is more, Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians did not interpret Jesus in the same way as the Hellenistic Jews of the Diaspora with their Greek universal humanity and sense of *philanthrôpia,* of general philanthropy and openness towards gentiles. And non-Jewish Greeks, Syrians, Romans and so forth, who had had absolutely no part in Israel's hopes of salvation, naturally enough proceeded to express the salvation they had found in Jesus in quite different categories. Yet

[5] See the interpolation in the twelfth petition of the Jewish prayer of 'Eighteen Supplications': 'May the Nazarenes and heretics perish instantly. May they be expunged from the book of life and not be recorded among the righteous' (see K.G. Kuhn, *Achtzehngebet und Vaterunser und der Reim* [WUNT, 1] (Tübingen 1950), 18-21).

despite fundamental differences between the earliest local groups of Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians, Greek-speaking congregations of Christianized Jews and Christian gentiles, they all had at least this in common: whatever the differences between them might be, they shared the culture − indeed, the Hellenistic culture − of the ancient world, especially in Galilee (but even in Judea: in important circles in Jerusalem, with its large number of Greek synagogues) which, as a practically bilingual country, encircled by the Greek cities of the Decapolis, was then held by Judea in the south to be a more or less pagan land out of which no good could come.

Whether we use its Jewish or its Hellenistic models of expectation, that antique culture is quite foreign to us. Our hopes of good-to-come have a different complexion and focus. Our conceptions of that good are different too. Quite possibly − if one may venture an a priori opinion − they should be subjected to the critique the ancient models provide; but perhaps the latter should be submitted in their turn to a modern critique. All ways of envisaging 'salvation' and all hopes regarding man's 'true mode of existence' are in any case culturally conditioned. For Christians Jesus, whom they encounter experientially as the ultimate source of salvation, is, of course, the final criterion − not the religio-cultural ideas on the subject entertained by Aramaic- or Greek-speaking Jews and Christianized Greeks. Still, the salvation those early Christians found in Jesus was couched in terms of such expectations as were current at that time, however much transformed, reappraised and corrected by
[023] the force of Jesus' own authority and historical impact. So the sheer strangeness, for us, of New Testament ideas about salvation-to-come can hardly be denied. We do not look for a celestial son of man to appear at any moment as our judge and set up a messianic commonwealth − concerning which we might well enquire anxiously, as people did then, whether Christians already dead will nevertheless have part in it (1 Thess. 4:13-17). We may be rather hasty in our judgement here. One can, after all, wait quite a time for a train that fails to come. But anyone in this day and age who has waited on the platform for a scheduled train, not just for hours but for days and weeks – in our case for centuries – and the train simply fails to materialize, can no longer psychologically maintain or substantiate this 'train expectancy'. Anyone will conclude soon enough that trains have ceased to run on this particular line. Hence the picture of Christ emerging from the New Testament is in the first instance actually weird − not just in the sense of the strange, scandalizing quality inherent in God's peculiar and divine dealings with humanity that surpass human wisdom; but strange or 'weird' in a purely human, religio-cultural sense. The objection that Jesus Christ is in fact the one who subjects our all too human conceptions to critical judgement is true enough; but it is not pertinent. The ancient ideas about salvation, by reason of which the New

Testament figure of Jesus is on the one hand rendered historically unrecognizable and, on the other, is revealed to the eye of faith in his true identity as the bringer of salvation, do not in themselves subject us to any critique, except insofar as, in their own way, they posit the criterion of Jesus as final source of salvation. Anyone who fails to see this distinction is proposing not Jesus Christ but a particular bit of religious culture as the norm of Christian faith − and that ceases to be faith in Jesus of Nazareth, whereas the basic affirmation of the Christian creed is our confession concerning *Jesus,* that is, 'Jesus of Nazareth': that he is 'the Christ, the only begotten Son, our Lord'. The overriding normative factor here is *'credo in Jesum'*: I believe in the manifestation of this concrete person, Jesus, who appeared in our history with the historical name 'Jesus of Nazareth'. In him we find final salvation, wellbeing. This is the fundamental creed of early Christianity.

Our pattern of expectation regarding salvation-for-mankind in no way resembles the ancient varieties, centred as they were on a messiah-son of David or a messiah-son of man; and just as foreign to us is the combination of those two originally independent traditions.

That in itself is a key reason why I set about writing this book: what does [024] salvation in Jesus, coming to us from God, mean to us now? After all, 'wellbeing' is a concept which linguistically, and thus in the context of human experience of reality with its social implications, is brought to life and made intelligible only through contrasting negative experiences, conjoined with at least sporadic experiences of what 'makes sense' − whence there arises a hopeful anticipation of 'total sense' or 'haleness', being whole. Who would ever call pure experience, positive experience, 'wellbeing' except against a contrasting background of very negative experiences already undergone? All along our experience has been that even out of our catastrophic Western history a utopia is growing among us. This concrete experience has been reflected in all sorts of emancipatory movements − movements intended to deliver people from their social alienation, while various scientific techniques (psychotherapeutic release; Gestalt therapy; androgogy; social work; counselling, etc.) were meant to free them from the loss of personal identity. In our day the existence of a number of factors in our lives, apart from Jesus Christ, which, as a matter of historical truth, do induce wellbeing and do heal people or make them whole, has forced itself on our awareness more than ever before. This puts the statement − till recently bandied about in some Christian circles without the slightest reservation − that 'all true salvation comes from Jesus Christ alone', in a problematic, thoroughly opaque, at the very least astounding context of implausibility.

Any critical assessment of our present-day culture reveals that this modern anticipation of future wellbeing, which especially since the nineteenth century

has staked all its hope on science and technology alone, eventually runs amok and leads to human alienation, simply because its conception of man is too restricted. This narrowed understanding, which has made science and technology, if not the exclusive, at any rate the representative values of Western culture, has actually wrought another hardship, above all in a society that gives virtual priority to economic values and to nothing else. It prompts critical appraisal of the whole modern concept of what constitutes wellbeing. Thus the view that all this is alien to the New Testament is grounded not just in a debt owed to that Testament itself but also, and just as essentially, in defective understanding of ourselves and present-day reality. That too calls for critique. There are sources of wellbeing and healing in human life that go beyond science and technology. This is the new insight achieved by science. In
[025] principle, and however paradoxically, it serves to reinstate a variety of gratuitous experiences − including religious ones − as factors in human wellbeing.

We must not forget, of course, that this anti-technological insight − in the sense that it relativizes technocracy − is itself partly the result of scientific analysis. It is a scientific insight; and as such it does not in itself validate a different, non-scientific approach to things. What is more, the circles in which this scientific perception of the extra-scientific factors in 'wellbeing' has emerged are precisely those which for the most part insist that such fulfilment is 'self-actualizing', in the sense that, while even if the religious factor − with its concomitant awareness of gratuitousness and of being centred on other people − is admittedly an essential element of human wellbeing, the source and strength of that wellbeing are situated entirely in the person without any reference to absolute transcendence. There is no place for theology in this view of things. In this perspective, therefore, theology should disappear and would do better to devote all its energies to the human sciences.

Hence it would seem that (setting aside this last ideological assertion) the religious concept of 'salvation', compared to that of the New Testament, has really been whittled down in our day: it has had to yield a lot of territory to other, manifestly effective 'salvific' agencies. This situation makes the question of what human wellbeing really consists in the focal point of all our problems today. For we realise that, while the possibility of overcoming various forms of human alienation through science and technology is perfectly real, this applies only to alienation arising from physical, psychosomatic, psychic and social types of conditioning − from the absence of liberating or the presence of inhibiting factors likely to condition human freedom, which expert and active intervention can to a large extent handle successfully. That begs the question whether there is not a more profound alienation, linked with human finitude and entanglement with nature (which, despite every attempt to assimilate and

humanize it, remains fundamentally alien and menacing) − whether, indeed, there is not some alienation wrought by guilt and sin. The human person's self-redemption would seem to be limited after all. And that raises a further problem: is it not precisely this range of deeper issues that Jesus of Nazareth specifically articulates when he speaks of a deliverance which really does liberate a person to perfect 'freedom', to an autonomy realized only in joyful bondage to a transcendent and, for that very reason, liberating, living God (Gal. 5:1).

That we must look to Jesus Christ alone for every facet of salvation, as a representative Christian tradition has often asserted, is contradicted anyway by a great many facts of modern experience. This, too, has confused a lot of Christians, who have been obliged to revise their earlier view of the historical faith on many points. That experience is another reason for writing this book and has helped to determine its form. [026]

2. There is more to it than that. In a period when Western society is no longer considered to be the world but just a small, often very pretentious constituent of a larger whole − a larger world of mankind which, furthermore, groans under the painful impact of Western aspirations and practices − the Christian claim that 'in no one else is there redemption' meets with loud protest. 'Christian imperialism' is a constant accusing cry − not least on the lips of Westerners themselves; for often enough they think they can only rediscover their identity by repudiating their own past. To some the Christian claim is suspect in that it discriminates, as they think, against non-Christian religions and cultures, or even smacks of Western colonialist one-upmanship and selfish favouritism, subjectively compensated for by an expansionist sort of missioneering on a world scale. Even this missionary consciousness has thrived on the once self-evident profession of Christ as the 'redeemer of the world'. Any current reflection on this from a Christian standpoint, therefore, must include some critical evaluation of the universality of Jesus if it is not to stand accused of ideology from the outset. On the other hand it must not dodge the question of truth or retreat into accommodation of the modern insistence on pluralism, insofar as this is bound to imply not venturing to go on being oneself and not daring to deviate from the rest.

But suppose that this happens to be the logical outcome of the gospel...?

3. There is something else that our period in particular demonstrates regarding 'Jesus of Nazareth', even if it is not, historically speaking, altogether novel: it is not just church people who take a serious interest in Jesus of Nazareth.

The gospels tell us what Jesus came to mean to a group of people known eventually as the *ekklesia* of Christ.[6] The early writings of this community,

[6] Rom. 16:16, or: '*ekklesia* of God' (1 Cor:1:2; 10:32; 16:22; 15:9, etc.).

collated in the New Testament to be read, meditated upon and studied as their
[027] book, are still today, for all conscious members of this 'Christ movement', a source of critical reflection on their life and conduct as Christians.

At the same time Jesus' concretization in literature, namely in that same New Testament, has given him form and substance. He is, as it were, objectivized in it. This puts him right in the limelight in a special way. Thanks to the transmitted documents Jesus is part of world literature and has become accessible to all. He has become 'common property'; and the New Testament is not just the exclusive book of Christendom. This piece of literature is public property and can be studied from a historical standpoint. The resultant knowledge, verifiable by outsiders, yields a view of Jesus that can also be a touchstone for the pictures that believers have formed of him down the centuries. Christians cannot spurn such a generally accessible starting-point for knowledge of Jesus as unworthy of their notice. Believers' ideas about Christ can be educated; they must be tested and, if necessary, revised in the light of it. Thus the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is universally accessible turns out to be of service to Christians' faith, not in an apologetic sense but as a critical confrontation.

Interpretation of Jesus outside the church varies greatly. The Marxist philosopher Roger Garaudy wrote: *'Rendez-le nous',* give Jesus of Nazareth back to us (non-churchgoers, even atheists); you church people can't keep *him* for yourself. Gandhi said: 'Without needing to be a Christian I can still testify to what this Jesus means in my life.' A lot of humanists, too, find guidance and inspiration in Jesus of Nazareth (as well as in other sources). In our day it is especially young people − in the Jesus movement, for instance − who are outside any church and yet find their wellbeing, inspiration and orientation in Jesus. Jesus is manifestly not the monopoly of the Christian churches. One might say that in many circles he is being 'de-confessionalized'. In India people are asking: what does Jesus mean to me as a Hindu? And elsewhere: what does he mean to me as a Muslim? Behind the Iron Curtain, too, young people are attracted to 'Jesus of Nazareth'.

Someone who attempts to size up this phenomenon straightaway on the basis of a church interpretation of Jesus runs the risk of remaining blind to precisely those elements of Jesus which many find so meaningful and inspiring, while church people have ignored them for centuries or have just not seen them. Non-church interpretations of Jesus serve to remind us that Jesus does indeed have something to say which is *relevant at a human level*, in that he
[028] speaks also to non-Christians. This raises the question of the close connection between the gospel, the religious aspect and the human being. The church's interpretation of Jesus − in him God's universal mercy has made a personal appearance among us − is perhaps given a highly modern setting. So many

people, after all, have ceased to make head or tail of God or of the Christian churches. Church people are themselves guilty in this respect. Yet the very same individuals find their wellbeing and inspiration in the man Jesus. Via a detour (if such it is), that is to say Jesus, are they, by attaching themselves to him, leaving open the question of God and the ecclesiological problem − for the time being or perhaps permanently?[7] Through a divine pedagogy of charitableness (so at least the more flexible believer will interpret the situation) the 'absence of God' is evidently 'compensated for' by the inspiration which Jesus affords to many non-church people. The image which people cannot resist forming of God, even if they acknowledge no such reality, is obviously replaced for many of them by the 'symbol' and the 'myth' of Jesus of Nazareth. For the symbolic and mythical character of 'Jesus' in all interpretations of him − especially outside the churches, and whether 'believing' or otherwise − seems to me the fundamental and most striking thing. To them Jesus becomes an 'a-temporal' model of true humanity. This non-church view of Jesus is unmistakably operative, actually at work in history. Therein lies an opportunity, but also a possible line of retreat: 'Jesus' becomes the answer, that is, the stopgap, for all our unsolved problems. Jesus people frequently give this impression, but I get it just as strongly sometimes from orthodox church people. Augustine said it long ago: *'Christus solutio omnium difficultatum',* Jesus is the answer to every problem. An apt slogan, but a dangerous one! The fact is that for many outside the churches 'Jesus of Nazareth' is made to symbolize transcendence of any sort.

At any rate this encounter with Jesus outside the churches clearly demonstrates that people as a whole want to keep open the question of authentic transcendence and at least not dismiss 'the sacred' with a categorical 'no'. It can't be denied that this may be a flight from the serious problems with which the reality of God as well as the historico-social reality of the church confronts us all. Whether (to adopt modern, neo-dogmatic jargon) it is a flight per se[8] is open to question. Mankind cannot abandon 'God', for the (to faith) simple reason that God will not abandon man and continues to 'visit' us by routes which we cannot map in advance. That in a secularized period, of all things, when God is disappearing, the world should be 'sold' on Jesus of [029] Nazareth, whether in a political context or in the dimension of *homo ludens,* whose play is aimlessly gratuitous − the tomfoolery of 'festivals' − may (no question here of *fatum,* destiny or the law of things, only of a vital chance of freedom, in whatever direction) offer an accepted or rejected prospect of grace and mercy on the part of God, who in Jesus is bent on our good, whether we

[7] See H. Bourgeois, 'Visages de Jésus et manifestation de Dieu', in *LVie*, n. 112 (1973) (71-84), 82.
[8] H. van Zoelen, 'Jezus van Nazareth: persoonsverheerlijking als 'symptoom', in *Dwang, dwaling en bedrog* (Baarn 1971), 52-67.

stray or not. No automatic rules apply here. Opportunities of 'saving health' in this contemporary situation are not to be disavowed by believers in God − I would say: not in spite of but actually because of all the criticism of religion and being sick of the churches and their God.

It is precisely this interpretation of Jesus outside the churches that constitutes a challenge for the Christian theologian. What do the 'churches of Christ' have to say to outsiders? What will they have to say after first listening to what non-church people have to tell them about Jesus of Nazareth? This was another reason for writing this book.

4. Inside the churches, too, the traditional and, despite a number of scholastic variants, nonetheless uniform Christology has fallen apart in our time. There is a nexus of christological problems, though these are not separable from what we have been discussing. Theologically speaking, the problem boils down to this: can we ascribe dogmatic significance to the earthly life of Jesus, to his message and ministry, his 'words and acts', or not? In everyday language this means: is 'Christian salvation' vested in the Jesus who lived here on earth, or solely in the crucified-and-risen one? The problem is often explicitly formulated as a dilemma.[9] Parallel with this dilemma, one finds among church-affiliated Christians a number of other mutually contrasting positions: (a) on the one hand a theology of Jesus of Nazareth, experienced as 'saving reality' and interpreted as an orientation and inspiration for Christian living in our time; on the other, a Christology that starts from the Easter message *(kerygma)* and celebrates Christ, presenting him as the Christ present in the ritual worship of the church; (b) on the one hand a this-worldly, 'low church' Christianity, which is directly oriented to the message and conduct of Jesus of Nazareth and is often on the periphery of the churches or outside them altogether; on the other, a 'high church' Christianity, which draws its life from the *kerygma* of the crucified-and-risen 'head of the church', present and
[030] operative within it today, and which tends to recoil from social and political engagement 'in Christ's name'; (c) on the one hand a total emphasis on the man Jesus as inspiration and orientation for working, not uncritically but committedly, to achieve a better world here on earth, without expressly introducing any vista of eternal life or an eschatological encounter with Christ, sometimes even explicitly rejecting it; on the other hand, a total emphasis on the God 'Jesus Christ', the Lord exalted to the Father's side, who is alive and active among us even now, is celebrated in liturgy and pours out upon us the Spirit as pledge of an eternal life to come, more or less perpendicular to our historical existence in this world, whose form passes away.

[9] We have a typical example of this dilemma in the contrast between two articles, one by G. Fohrer, 'Das Alte Testament und das Thema "Christologie" ', in EvTh 30 (1970), 281-298, the other by G. Klein,' "Reich Gottes" als biblischer Zentralbegriff', ibid, 642-670.

Two types of Christianity, based on two types of Christology. In the one case an explicit allergy to the word 'Christ' (in many recent eucharistic canons the term is on the way out), in the other an obvious, sometimes aggressive and un-Christian aversion to the word 'Jesus' (of Nazareth), as though our belief were not in a concrete person but in a gnostic mystery cult. There is no point in trying to conceal the existence of these two types. They are very much with us and are certainly acted upon, and they do not wholly correspond to the contrast between 'conservative' and 'progressive'. One can set them over against each other: on the one hand 'Jesus followers', who tend to ignore the fundamental breaking points in Jesus' life and his totally patient, submissive relationship with his Father, and on the other hand 'disciples of the Christ', who are in danger of turning him into a myth, in no way essentially connected with Jesus of Nazareth. This situation obviously has important consequences for our understanding of Scripture, theology and history, and, above all, concretely in the pastoral sphere. Contrary positions in Christology, whether explicitly stated or not, often underlie the current polarization among Christians.

But before engaging in discussion, each would do well to acknowledge the Christian status of the other. One is a Christian if one is persuaded that final salvation-from-God is disclosed in the person of Jesus and that this basic conviction gives rise to a community or fellowship of grace − even though those who accept this may still adopt different positions on what the fullness of Jesus Christ entails, that is, on how to 'fill in' the credal formula: I believe in Jesus (of Nazareth) the Christ, the only begotten Son, our Lord; I believe in Jesus as that definitive saving reality which gives ultimate meaning and purpose to my life. If one can start from the assumption that the other party accepts this, then the situation is at any rate one of dialogue among Christians and, one would hope, of a Christian dialogue. [031]

5. The theologian also has to face the (in the 'modern view' admittedly unappealing) question of truth. Having due regard to the intention of faith as well as the critical and rational posture which our status as human beings demands, the theologian realizes that − however intense concrete religious experiences may be, as well as the historical identifications of 'salvation' and human liberation − such experiences remain problematic. They can never signify for others an invitation that will compel and constrain them, even in freedom, unless it has been reasonably demonstrated that in and through such experiences and identifications of 'salvation', belonging to a particular human community, we really are in contact with the reality to which human beings in the course of history have ascribed the name of God, the creator of all that is

and is to be.[10] Much as I appreciate the significance, the unique importance, of existential experience and religious enthusiasm, I am nonetheless certain that a God who is encountered simply as '*my* God' and is avowed as such is a non-god, unless it can be reasonably − which is not at all to say mathematically or in a rationally conclusive way − shown that in this person, Jesus of Nazareth, we are actually talking about the one who liberates and yet at the same time − however incomprehensibly − is the final arbiter of meaning, the 'creator of heaven and earth'. Here if anywhere in the sphere of religion pious self-deception is a very real possibility. So religious faith in Jesus of Nazareth, a person appearing in human history, is problematic for me if the personal relationship between this historically localizable individual and the 'creator of heaven and earth', the universal factor cementing all that lives and moves − the living God − is not dear to us. I can appreciate enthusiasm for 'Jesus of Nazareth' as an inspiring human being − at the human level that in itself is quite something! But it entails no binding invitation, can bear no stamp of universal humanity, unless it can be shown that 'the creator', the (monotheistic) God of Jews, Muslims, Christians and so many others, is personally implicated in this Jesus event.

Hence what in this book might appear to be apologetic and critical is actually prompted by a concern for truth, wherever that may be found to reside − inside or outside the churches. As my study of christological belief in Jesus of Nazareth proceeded, the realization (current even in early Christianity) that such belief (like myth) contains its own justification and
[032] certitude has grown on me more and more: the 'why' of my belief in Jesus as the 'final saving good' is to be justified only in faith (in that sense faith is a storm-free zone, exempt from criticism); but the moment I speak of my faith (and I do so as soon as I have it) I have already left that storm-free zone and become vulnerable to the exigencies of critical rationality (in that sense there is no storm-free zone). That is why this book was written: in deference to the unique and irreducibly original character of believing, of exercising faith, and out of respect for the demands of critical rationality. Each can help protect the other from becoming totalitarian and detrimental to freedom.

6. Lastly there is the painful and unresolved question of the relationship between Christians and Jews. Among others, Christians share the blame for Western anti-Semitism that made possible the Nazi *Endlösung*. As theologians whose business it is to reflect on the Jewish man, Jesus of Nazareth, we cannot behave as if we knew nothing of the historical relations between Jews and Christians, cannot act as if what a few Jews did to Jesus has not been eclipsed

[10] See also W. Pannenberg, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis ausgelegt und verantwortet vor den Fragen der Gegenwart* (Hamburg 1972), 44.

long ago by what we have all done to the Jews in the course of history. Recent Jewish literature about Jesus[11] shows that after centuries of estrangement from him Jews have become aware, through their own 'holocaust' (burnt offering) at Auschwitz and elsewhere, of their solidarity with the 'holocaust' of Jesus of Nazareth. Judaism has no pantheon, but it does have a memorably noble martyrology. Many Jews now recognize that this is where Jesus belongs. As Martin Buber puts it: 'From my youth on, I have felt that Jesus was my elder brother. That Christianity has regarded and still does regard him as God and redeemer has always appeared to me a matter of the utmost seriousness which for his sake and for mine I must try to comprehend.'[12]

Theologians cannot do all that much to repair these hurtful and dramatically distorted relationships; yet they do have their own contribution to make. There is no denying that one of the hermeneutic keys to an understanding of the New Testament is the tussle between 'Israel' and the 'church';[13] but historians and theologians can make a good case that to a large extent Christianity just took over an internal Jewish critique of Israel, and that the early Christian interpretation of Jesus is really a Jewish one. The basic trends in Christianity were touched off by Jews and were firmly established long before non-Jewish, gentile-Christian influences had started to operate. So anti-Jewish feeling is quite foreign to the earliest trends in Christianity; which is why I shall keep on emphasizing it, should certain early Christian interpretations be nothing more than a Christian resumption of pre-Christian, Jewish patterns of thought and action. [033]

III. A CHALLENGE

With all these problems in mind – and still accumulating in the course of study − I have written this book as a piece of reflective thinking about Jesus of Nazareth, whom the churches of Christ, to which I belong, confess as final salvation: in Jewish terms, the Christ, Son of God and son of man; in Hellenistic terms, the Son of God in a fully ontological sense.

The intention is not apologetic, although I have no qualms about honest

[11] See e.g. Schalom Asch, *Der Nazarener* (Amsterdam 1950); M. Brod, *De Meister* (Gütersloh 1951); M. Buber, *Zwei Glaubensweisen* (Zürich 1950) and *Der Jude und sein Judentum* (Cologne 1963); Joel Carmichael, *Leben und Tod des Jesus von Nazareth* (Munich 1966); Schalom ben Chorin, *Bruder Jesus* (Munich 1967); Haim Cohen, *Trial and death of Jesus* (Tel Aviv 1968); W.P. Eckert, *Judenhasz, Schuld der Christen?* (Essen 1966); David Flusser, *Jesus* (Hamburg-Reinbeck 1968); J. Isaac, *Jésus et Israel* (Paris 1970); Ascher Finkel, *The teacher of Nazareth* (Leyden 1964); Aharon Kabak, *The narrow path* (Jerusalem 1968); J. Klausner, *Jesus von Nazareth* (Jerusalem 1952); Pinehas E. Lapide, *Jesus in Israel* (Gladbeck 1970); S. Schwartz, *La réhabilitation juive de Jésus* (Martizay 1969); see also Morris Goldstein, *Jesus in the Jewish tradition* (New York 1950), and F. Andermann, *Das grosze Gesicht* (Munich 1971).

[12] M. Buber, *Zwei Glaubensweisen,* foreword.

[13] Kl. Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu* (thesis of the book).

apologetics. That is to say, there is no attempt to legitimize the church's dogma or to represent it as the only meaningful and possible interpretation of Jesus consonant with reason. I establish that there are other interpretations that dismiss Jesus, others again which inspire and orient people to good purpose without any christological confession. Close attention is paid to these interpretations, even though not always spelled out in so many words. Such readiness to listen has been part and parcel of the enquiry.

As a believer I want to look critically into the intelligibility for man of christological belief in Jesus, especially in its origin. Face to face with the many real problems, my concern is indeed to hold a *fides quaerens intellectum* and an *intellectus quaerens fidem* together: that is, with the same regard for faith and for human reason I want to look for what a christological belief in Jesus of Nazareth can intelligibly signify to people today.

I say 'intelligibly', in no sense denying thereby that salvation-in-Jesus which derives from God is a mystery. What the word is meant to convey is a critical posture on the believing theologian's part, which refuses to identify the mystery of God with 'mysteries' − in the sense of 'things incomprehensible' − fabricated by human beings themselves: things that have nothing to do with the mystery of God's saving acts in history but are nevertheless often touted by some of our brothers as a 'Christian mystery', and thus unassailable orthodoxy, and who in this way bring the faith into ridicule.

That the man Jesus, in the sense of 'a human person', is for me the starting point of all my reflection I would call a sort of palisade that needs no further proof or justification. It is a truism. There are no ghosts or gods in disguise
[034] wandering around human history; only people. What is peculiar, unique about this person, Jesus − and that may slip from our grasp into depths unfathomable − is what I seek to discover; for it is a fact that this Jesus of Nazareth succeeded in touching off a religious movement that became a world religion asserting that Jesus is the revelation, in personal form, of God. Thus the question of his ultimate identity governs the whole of this enquiry. My purpose is to look for possible evidence in the picture of Jesus reconstructed by historical criticism, pointers that could direct human inquiry regarding our 'wellbeing' to the Christian tender of a reply that refers to a particular saving action of God in this Jesus; and I do so in the same sort of reaction, characteristic of the New Testament, against pre-canonical *theios anèr* Christologies, against Christology centred on a mundane god, masquerading in human form (after the Greek model), that prompted Paul and Mark, more especially, to inveigh so fiercely against it, because such views misrepresent the authentic import of the true Son of God.

Faith and historical criticism go hand in hand, therefore, on almost every page of this book. It is bound to be so, as we claim to discover salvation in

Jesus, a historical human being, manifested in a quite specific period of history. For then history and faith each has its own proper competence and angle of approach, while both nevertheless concern one and the same reality: Jesus of Nazareth, a historical phenomenon.

In faith, yet identifying myself with the doubts concerning the 'Christ of the church' − which I have heard so sharply expressed all around me in the Netherlands and everywhere else, sometimes aggressively, sometimes regretfully, partly because people are existentially unable to believe as they once did − I have set out to search for 'meta-dogmatic' clues. In the process I have moved through and beyond the church's dogma, although aware that this very dogma drove me to undertake the search, and I have pursued the clues without knowing in advance where they would take me, without even knowing whether this line of attack would not in the end be bound to fail, as some of my students contended. Even failures − especially failures, perhaps − make one wiser. There was always that possibility. As the work progressed I could not rid myself of the growing conviction that however exact a historical reconstruction of the so-called 'authentic' Jesus of Nazareth one tries to make, any historically substantiated result can only yield a Jesus image, never the real Jesus of Nazareth. What happens when the historical method is systematically applied to assess Jesus is, after all, a qualitative change imposed upon the ordinary, spontaneous apprehension or recollection of a person from the past. [035] And however well supported historically this scientifically created image may be, Jesus' first disciples were never confronted with such a likeness of him − even though it may be wholly relevant to the then living Jesus whom the churches now acknowledge as the Christ. The question of the vital continuity between the faith of the early church and 'Jesus of Nazareth' is quite different from that of the continuity between a scientifically based, historical Jesus figure and the aforesaid faith of the early church; different, but in no way extraneous or alien to it.

In a period given to hermeneutics, it goes without saying that this study neither has been nor possibly could be carried out by skipping over what twenty centuries of Christian history have told us about the churches' credal profession and actual conduct. Of course, in writing this book I took into account my earlier studies (lectures) on patristic, Carolingian, medieval and post-Tridentine Christologies, although they are not directly discussed. I confine myself to a consideration of the 'course taken by the dogma' from the start of early Christianity up to the formation of the gospels and the books of the New Testament, a period that brings us closest to Jesus but is still very reticent about the matter of identifying Jesus of Nazareth, in whom his followers, after his death, found final and definitive salvation. Initially his death either presented no problem or, where salvation is concerned, was

considered to be 'neutral'. The effect of this incubatory prehistory of the canonical 'New Testament' can be both to liberate and at the same time to provide a new focus and perspective for what many feel to be the stultified traditional Christology of our systematized Western theology. Hence the subtitle 'An experiment in Christology' is still too pretentious and premature. This book is a prolegomenon. I call it a prolegomenon not because of what it actually says, but because of what had been my original intention: to offer a summary view of the contemporary problem of 'redemption' and 'emancipation' or human self-liberation, partly with 'liberation theology' in mind.

Besides sustained reflection, the book is meant to provide constant information, if only because not every Christian can afford the luxury enjoyed by those who have been 'freed' by the community to busy themselves with these vital matters, and furthermore, because I must persist in putting on record that, for lack of well grounded information, a lot of people fall into an 'overbearing' style of Christian belief, overbearing and even un-Christian in its
[036] absolute claims, so alien to Jesus and his gospel. Much passes for 'Christian' that for anyone conversant with the New Testament in a spirit of study and prayer turns out to be essentially un-Christian. So I regard this book as an obligation owed to the community, first and foremost the Christian community, but also to all who are interested in mankind's lot and destiny.

IV. NOTE ON EXEGESIS AND THEOLOGY

In the course of more than three years' preliminary exegetical work on this book I have repeatedly been baffled, sometimes almost to the point of distraction, by a weighty problem. The fundamental stimulus behind this whole project seemed at times to lead to an impossible enterprise: there is almost no biblical pericope on which exegetes do not disagree among themselves − even though one has to admit that over the last ten years there has been growing consensus on basic exegetical problems among biblical scholars, both Catholic and Protestant. If the New Testament incorporates the first, constitutive impulse of the movement centred on Jesus in a potent testimony of faith, consciously guided and governed by what had been achieved through God's saving activity in Jesus of Nazareth, then theological reflection of any sort inevitably hinges on understanding this New Testament. Here, in human language, in words and images deriving from the social, cultural and religious idiom of the time, Christians expressed their belief in the decisive, God-given salvation-in-Jesus which they had experienced. In such circumstances, to dispense with a scientific approach to the Bible using all the methods of modern literary criticism would simply be to flout what is usually

referred to as the 'Word of God' − which in any case only reaches us through the words of religious people. If a believing community (which quite properly uses the sacred book for other purposes too, for instance in liturgical worship), wants to recover precisely what those affirmations of human faith signified at that time, it cannot do without literary criticism in its approach to the New Testament (in the context of Old Testament, inter-testament and post-New Testament literature as a whole) − unless it is prepared to ignore a fundamental belief, namely that the church itself, whether local congregation or governing authority, falls under God's judgement and lordship, being subject to the norm presented by the person and activity of Jesus of Nazareth, whom it acknowledges as 'the Christ, the only begotten Son, our Lord'. [037]

A systematic or reflective theologian is not ipso facto an expert exegete. I am very well aware of that. Yet without Scripture theologians are quite useless. Are they dependent, then, on specialist exegetes? No. But they are manifestly dependent on skilled exegesis; for, as in all branches of science, we find great diversity of opinion among exegetes. So theologians cannot arbitrarily select one of the views currently available, for instance one that fits best into some dogmatic synthesis of their own! That would be to misunderstand the basic function of Scripture in theology. So what can they do? Although not an exegetical specialist, the theologian should be able to evaluate the exegetical arguments advanced and, more particularly, to examine the postulates which lead one expert to interpret a scriptural pericope in one way and another to interpret it differently. Non-exegetical presuppositions are often the reason why opinions diverge. Hence theologians cannot simply settle for their 'preferred exegetes' (even though experience with the works of many authors often leads spontaneously to such preferences). Where there is agreement between exegetes of various schools (and by that I also mean explicitly: in various countries), the theologian will be happy to rely on it − unless here and there, over time, questions are raised, first through what is initially perceived as a solitary point of view, later as a result of other difficulties emerging in a similar context, until suddenly, in the teeth of common exegetical opinion, a commentator presents a quite novel, coherent view. I believe that, having weighed the arguments, theologians may in certain cases, contrary to received exegetical opinion, integrate this new insight − sometimes the resumption of a very old one − with their dogmatic scheme. (Quite often, as a matter of fact, the 'new' viewpoint eventually wins general approval.) Consensus among exegetes − leaving aside the presuppositions involved − does not seem to me a proper governing principle for theology. After all, exegetes themselves often draw on theological, that is, non-exegetical predilections, which the theologian is entitled to judge.

Then, of course, a theologian has to be careful about the kind of 'exegetical

slogans' that turn up in theology as in any other discipline, for instance the one recurrent in exegetical literature since M. Kähler: 'Mark is a Passion narrative with a lengthy introduction.' The thing is that slogans, while containing a grain of truth, usually miss fine points of detail.

[038] Above all, the theologian needs to object to the practice, so evident among exegetes, of exploiting one particular method alone to sanctify his convictions − the techniques of *Formgeschichte,* for example, or of an exclusive structuralism. As theologians they simply cannot rely on the results yielded by one exegetical method in isolation (which still leads to differing opinions − perhaps owing to its very exclusiveness, which, after all, harbours presuppositions of its own). Even in his day Ernst Troeltsch could say: 'A whole world view lies behind the historico-critical method.'[14] One can see in the literature how national differences in regard to exegesis often have a bearing on problems of 'method and truth', so that knowledge of these national perspectives affords a greater degree of theological 'independence', without denying some dependence on expert exegesis.

No less disastrous, on the other hand, is the dogmatic choice of a sort of 'common denominator' distilled from the available exegesis; such a procedure disregards biblical scholarship, so it cannot undergird a Christian theology. Theologians are therefore obliged to undertake detailed exegesis and cannot rely primarily on global exegetical studies (sometimes known as 'biblical theology'). Global studies only make sense if they are based on detailed studies; otherwise they often reflect the theological outlook of their authors rather than the pluralistic yet fundamentally unified New Testament interpretation of Jesus. Such a personal theological view is no foundation for a theology that aspires to be in some degree generally admissible.

In short: doing theology on a really scriptural basis is indeed a trying, laborious exercise; it means continually breaking down one's own preconceived 'syntheses' and reconstructing them; expectations are dashed, others are nurtured and grow. The synthesis itself is continually in movement; and so both the capacity to evaluate new exegetical literature and the capacity for synthesis are developed. From time to time people might accuse theologians who work in this way – who, in other words, venture too far into the field of exegesis − of committing blunders. Of course they do! Their sole defence then is that without exegesis all theologizing will be up in the air. Better to err on the proper path than to stray casually, albeit with no blemish or further defect from that moment on, onto a false track that can only lead to ideology.

[039] True, there is a distinction between exegesis and systematic theology; but in

[14] See E. Troeltsch, 'Ueber historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie', in *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 2 (Tübingen 1922²) (Aalen 1962), 729-753.

addition to exegesis as a purely critical and literary discipline, there is also a theological variety, in which one seeks to discover in Jesus and the earliest witnesses to Christian belief − in other words, in early Christianity − the definitively saving activity of God. It is this that determines the theological character of the exegesis, which is not made theological just by 'updating' it to give it current relevancy (the latter is what I call 'systematic theology'). As a matter of fact, the separation of biblical exegesis from thematic theology is relatively recent and was only completed, on a recognized basis, in the seventeenth century. Theological exegesis sets out to discover the theological dimension in the actual historical phenomenon of early Christianity; this is where the truth question first arises, not just in the Bible's 'topicality' for us today. To go looking for what is relevant to the present in the meaning of the New Testament is 'systematic theology', and this presupposes theological exegesis which scrutinizes the New Testament for God's conclusive saving activity in the emerging Judaeo-Christian religion.

Lastly, the main objection (which is very much on my mind): there is still Christian tradition, the life of the churches and, for Catholics, even the magisterium as an ecclesial function, an authoritative ministry to the church community. Indeed, without that church my quest would never have arisen! But this charism of the official ministry, in which God's Spirit is actively at work as it is in his churches, does not operate miraculously, still less through private revelations or instant lines of communication, but rather in a very historical fashion; this official ministry − up to and including the very top − is thus bound to rely on understanding of Scripture, assisted by exegesis. If, in view of the ecclesial structure intrinsic to its very nature, the ministry needs this assistance from exegetes and theologians; there can be no substitute for assistance of this kind. The same applies to the church as a community, which lives by an experience of Christ. Indeed, for theologians the living congregation or local church is a 'theological habitat', without which their searching of the Scriptures and theological reflection have nothing on which to ground themselves. Theology is not the exposition of books. But if people profess to have committed themselves in faith to Jesus, the Christ, and to have found their inspiration and orientation in him, with the living community as their setting, then I as a theologian will certainly want to know who it is they are talking about: a Jesus selected in accordance with purely contemporary fashion and present-day needs, or Jesus of Nazareth, from whom the great [040]
Christian traditions − albeit in many languages and tongues − were privileged to hear a very specific, pertinent message, which we today, with our own needs, have to pass on in creative fidelity, first and foremost by living it ourselves. The scholarship of exegetes and theologians cannot guarantee this fidelity and creativity; but among the many ecclesial and temporal factors

which serve in their respective ways to convey the guidance whereby God keeps the church on its true course as a credible hope for the world, there is a distinctive, indispensable place for exegesis and theology.

I conclude this introduction with a quotation from Y. Congar: '*Je respecte et j'interroge sans cesse la science des exégètes, mais je récuse leur magistère.*'[15]

Finally, I know that a scholarly critical approach (my standpoint in this book as a believer) is only one of many possibilities. This relativizes the whole book. Yet even this relative standpoint has its own right to existence and, in the end, inalienable pastoral value. It is with that pastoral intention − 'translatable', one hopes, by others − that the book was written, as one of many contributions to what can never be properly articulated: the life's secret of him whom I acknowledge as Jesus of Nazareth, in whom definitive and final salvation is to be found. That − and not some lack of trust in collegues − is why almost no theologians but a great many exegetes are cited in this book.

[15] Y. Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église* (Paris 1950), 498-499.

Part One

QUESTIONS OF METHOD, AND CRITERIA

Section One

JESUS OF NAZARETH, NORM AND CRITERION OF ANY INTERPRETATION OF JESUS

Chapter 1

THE BELIEVER'S HISTORICAL ACCESS TO JESUS OF NAZARETH

§1 Structure of the offer of salvation and the Christian response

Literature on the time of Jesus: A. Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* 3 vols, Munich 1953-1959; J. Bonsirven, *Le Judaisme pales-tinien au temps de Jésus-Christ,* 2 vols, Paris 1934-35; W. Foerster, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte,* vol. 1, *Das Judentum Palästinas zur Zeit Jesu und der Apostel,* Gütersloh 1964[4]; Ch. Guignebert, *Le monde juif vers le temps de Jésus,* Paris 1950; A. H. Gunneweg, *Geschichte Israels bis Bar Kochba* (Theol. Wissenschaft, 2), Stuttgart 1972; M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (WUNT, 10), Tübingen 1973[2] (1969); J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu,* 3 vols, Göttingen 1924, 1929, 1937; M. Lagrange, *Le Judaisme avant Jésus-Christ,* Paris 1931; E. Lohmeyer, *Galiläa und Jerusalem* (FRLANT, 34), Göttingen 1936; E. Lohse, *Umwelt des Neuen Testament,* Göttingen 1971; A. D. Nock, *Essays on religion and the ancient world,* 2 vols, Cambridge 1972; B. Reicke, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte,* Berlin 1965; M. Rostovtzeff, *The social and economic history of the Hellenistic world,* New York 1941 (=M. Rostowzew, *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der hellenistischen Welt,* 3 vols, Darmstadt 1955-1956); E. Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes im Zei falter Jesu Christi,* 3 vols, Leipzig 1909-1911[4].

A. THE HUMAN PERSON, FOCUS OF MANIFOLD RELATIONSHIPS [044]

A person forms the focus of an extensive area. Thus one cannot pose the question, 'Who is Jesus of Nazareth?' without reference to both prior history and what happened after him. No individual can be understood (a) independently of the course of the past events that surrounded him, that undergirded and confronted him and elicited his critical response; (b) independently of his relations with those around him, contemporaries who received from him and in turn influenced him and touched off specific reactions in him; (c) independently of the effect he had on subsequent history or of what he might have intended to set in motion through his actions. In other words, an individual person is the focal point of a series of interrelations

with the past, the future and his present situation.

This applies to Jesus as well − which is why the starting point for any Christology or Christian interpretation of Jesus is not simply Jesus of Nazareth, still less the church's kerygma or creed. Rather, it is the movement which Jesus himself started in the first century of our era, more particularly because this Jesus is known to us, historically, only via this movement. A historical fact is therefore our most justifiable point of departure; namely that the gospels tell us *what a certain man, Jesus, came to mean for the life of several groups of people*. In other words, the starting point is the first Christian community − but as a reflection of what Jesus himself was, said and did. Some Jews responded to Jesus' offer of salvation with an unconditional yes. What that offer was we can infer only indirectly from reactions and other evidence recorded in the New Testament: through the prism of the christological response of the earliest Christian communities. They speak of Jesus of Nazareth 'in the language of faith'; but in so doing they are still talking about the actual Jesus of Nazareth, a concrete, historical reality which addressed them.

This is immediately apparent from the tenor of their language. These Christian congregations put the emphasis not on 'Christ died', but on '... *died for our sins'*, nay, more 'died for our sins *in accordance with the scriptures'* (1 Cor. 15:3); or again, 'died, but was raised' (Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). To speak of Jesus in the language of faith is to express what the (assuredly) historical Jesus had come to signify for his disciples and how this is anchored in Jesus himself.
[045] History and empirical knowledge (information, therefore) are to be found here − but interpreted in the language of faith.

The only knowledge we possess of the Christ event reaches us via the concrete experience of the first local communities of Christians, who sensed a new life present in themselves, which they regarded as a gift of the *Pneuma,* the Spirit: an experience of new life in the ambience of the Spirit, but in remembrance of Jesus. That is why I said that the early Christian movement centred on Jesus is the inescapable, historically reliable point of departure. We cannot isolate the question, 'Who was Jesus of Nazareth?' Even a historian, asking himself this question, cannot ignore the actual impact of the man − himself part of a historical tradition or a religio-cultural situation/context − on a group of contemporaries who became his disciples on the one hand, and on the other hand on those who saw him in a quite different light, while evincing a no less extraordinary reaction − one that was to cost him his life. (It is an established fact that Jesus, having been handed over by the Jewish authorities, was put to death by the local Roman government.) So the historian is bound to ask: what manner of man must this have been who could trigger such extreme reactions − on the one hand, unconditional faith and on the other, aggressive disbelief? That the Romans, faced with the possibility of political agitation in

an occupied territory, should have crucified him says much about our human record of injustice. That the Jewish authorities should hand him over is only explicable (leaving human passions aside) if, from a Jewish viewpoint and by conventional standards, Jesus had somehow acted in a fundamentally non-Jewish fashion where religion is concerned (passing himself off as messiah is not enough to account for this: there were a number of other messianic pretenders in those days, who were not put to death for it). On the other hand there were the disciples who believed in Jesus, who responded unreservedly and positively to him and did so in such a way that after his execution they could not articulate the experience that underlay their response except by invoking the most varied, most evocative, most lofty religious ideas and codewords available in the Jewish and gentile worlds: son of man, eschatological prophet, messiah or Christ, 'son of God' (in both its Jewish and its Hellenistic meaning), 'lord' (the Jewish *mar* and Hellenistic *kyrios),* and so forth − evocative titles, some of which were meaningful for Jewish Christians but were simply unintelligible to Christians from the gentile world (e.g. son of man; messiah), reason enough for them to disappear from the Greek-speaking churches (e.g. son of man) or to lose all depth of meaning. [046]

This immediately suggests the relative character of the honorific titles. The important thing is that on the basis of their communal experiences these believers felt obliged to grasp for the loftiest titles provided by their religious and cultural milieu to verbalize something of their past experience with Jesus and their present experience arising from him. The Christian experience as the local church's communal response to what Jesus actually offered is primary; the titles, although not unimportant, are secondary; and again, even in Scripture they are interchangeable, replaceable by others, and they sometimes died out. The saving experience persisted and periodically called for appropriate expression and articulation in new social and historical situations. One might call it a 'disclosure' experience, a discovery event: a source experience (both for those who had known Jesus personally and for those who came to know about him by way of the *memoria Jesu* and the life of the local congregation); that is to say, they discovered in Jesus something which cannot be pinned down directly, empirically, but which is going to present itself as something gratuitous, *given* evidence to any open-minded person confronted with Jesus in a living community.

The structure of this community experience linking the 'new life' of the local congregation, present by virtue of the Spirit, with Jesus of Nazareth is interesting. *Pneuma* and *anamnesis,* Spirit and recollection of Jesus, are experienced as a single reality. Theologically this is explained in the New Testament in different ways: if we compare Acts with the Johannine gospel and with the initial (Aramaic) Judaeo-Christian Christology (which to some

extent can be distilled from the synoptics even now), we see that in Acts 2 the 'event of Pentecost' fifty days after Easter is an aetiological account of the pneumatic experiences of the Christian congregations over several years. In the Johannine gospel the aetiologically interpreted outpouring of the Spirit happens on Easter day, that is, it is directly associated with the resurrection, so that once again Jesus and Spirit, past remembrance and present moment, are intrinsically conjoined; the Johannine gospel defines the link between *Pneuma* and *anamnesis* (recollection or remembrance) even more precisely when it has the Lord say that when the Spirit comes he will bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14). The local congregation's pneumatic experiences are intrinsically bound up with the *memoria Jesu*. There is an
[047] organic connection between the present, the here and now of the communal experience (*Pneuma*), and the Jesus-'past' (remembrance).

There is a structure to be found in and even outside the synoptic gospels, but in the Johannine gospel it is more explicitly and deliberately formulated. The formula 'Do you not remember . . .?' occurs frequently outside the Johannine gospel as well (see Mk. 8:18-19 and parallel Mt. 16:9; Mk. 14:9 and parallel Mt. 26:13; Lk. 24:6-8; Acts 20:35; 2 Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1-2). Lastly, in the eucharistic formula the church itself affirms that its liturgical celebration is carried out 'in remembrance of Jesus' (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25). In other words, the church's kerygma is simultaneously a recollection of the earthly Jesus, of what he said and did. This whole book should make that clear.

So when Christian congregations reflect on their own experience they interpret it in relation both to the Spirit and to Jesus of Nazareth, so much so that these two relations initially appeared to be one: at an early stage Paul could still say, 'The Lord is the *Pneuma*' (2 Cor. 3:17). Again, the community articulated its experience of this relationship in (a) stories about Jesus (sayings, stories and parables as *memoria Jesu*), and (b) kerygmata, hymns and credal declarations, whereby in ways that differed considerably among the various local churches the gist of what Jesus signified for them was couched in the language of faith and thus could be trumpeted abroad.

The experience of the first Christian congregations, inseparably associated with first-hand contact with Jesus and later, through the *memoria Jesu,* with continuing fellowship with the Lord, is therefore the matrix of the New Testament as a written text. And thanks to that the earliest Christian congregations and their experience are historically accessible to us; they afford, at a historical level, the most reliable access to Jesus of Nazareth. What the historical Jesus has left us is not primarily a kind of résumé or bits and pieces of proclamation of God's approaching kingdom, nor a kerygma or string of *verba et facta ipsissima,* that is, a record of precisely what he did as a historical individual or a number of directives and wise sayings that can fairly certainly

be gleaned from the gospels. What he did leave behind − only through what he was, did and said, simply through his activities as this particular human being − was a movement, a living fellowship of believers who had become conscious of being the new people of God, the eschatological 'assembly' of God − not a 'sacred remnant' but the firstborn of the gathering together of all Israel, and eventually of all mankind: an eschatological liberation movement unifying all [048] people: universal *shalom*.[1]

B. REVELATION AND *'le croyable disponible'*

More or less parallel with the Protestant kerygma theology of K. Barth and especially of R. Bultmann, who opposed the nineteenth century liberal-historical quest for Jesus, Catholic theology from around 1910 to 1960, in reaction against modernism, was also dominated by *'Le donné révéle'* (title of a well-known work by A. Gardeil). Insofar as this entails a predetermined and as it were positivistically interpreted revelational datum, many now regard it with suspicion. The sociology of knowledge, and cognate (in particular linguistic) sciences, have given us more exact insight into the structure of all knowing (to which the knowledge imparted by faith, despite its irreducible character, forms no exception). This makes us realize that actuality, insofar as it is experienced and considered by us − in other words, experiential reality − is inherently coloured and partly conditioned by the social (mental and cultural) paraphernalia that we carry with us from the past into the present: the cultural pattern that informs even our inner life.[2] That is why the particular experiential reality that forms the Christian faith is not only dependent on the offer of that reality (Jesus of Nazareth), but its experience and expression − for instance, in creeds and statements of belief, in liturgy and theology − are also inherently coloured and co-determined by the apparatus of the human mind here and now, by what is technically termed the 'cultural situation context'. Hence what is reality for faith is set in the midst of history, is itself an intrinsic part of human history, is itself history and culture. Revelation and its expression in cultural history are inseparable. Revelation is always implicit in what P. Ricoeur calls *'le croyable disponible'* of a certain period, that is, the totality of generally accepted assumptions, expectations and ideologies, which nonetheless (and that is the Christian view) change inwardly in and through the fact that they become the ongoing surge of revelation. Thus the Christian from the Hellenistic *oikoumene* is in every respect more like other Romans and Greeks than his fellow Christians in 1973; even so, in an expressly Christian context the 1973 Christian is closer to the Hellenistic Christian than to many of

[1] This brief summary is borne out in the course of this book as a whole.
[2] See P. Berger and Th. Luckmann, *The social construction of reality* (New York 1966); B. Lee Woolf, *Sprache, Denken, Wirklichkeit* (Hamburg 1968[4]) (from the English, 1956).

his own contemporaries. Awareness of the fact that every religion, the
[049] Christian religion included, is conditioned by cultural-historical factors substantially moderates the absolute character of values as currently apprehended, just as it also mitigates the pressure of the past. On the other hand the gospel makes a proviso with regard to every one of its cultural expressions in kerygma, dogma, creed or theology. It is clear from the early Christian use of such honorific titles as son of man, messiah, Christ and Son of God that the Christian faith, in its very invocation of this cultural-religious legacy in which the revelation is articulated, also distances itself from that inheritance. So the Christian's response to the question of Christian identity can never be total identification with the culture − even the religious culture − which surrounds him and in which he participates; nor can his faith be identified completely with even its most official articulations, however validly and truly these may express the mystery of faith. Because of this disharmony between the mystery of faith and its articulation, conditioned by the religious culture, there is need not only for a historical approach to dogma and a hermeneutic evaluation of early Christianity and its subsequent development, but also for sociological inquiry that evaluates ideologies critically. Therefore, a new language of faith, in which Jesus of Nazareth is identified in faith, will have to display both critical reservation towards and non-identification with the dominant categories, expectations and ideologies of the present by positively invoking the help of both. In its very expression the reservations of faith are (inevitably from an anthropological standpoint) essentially cultural and formative of culture: formative, therefore, of the church. Every religious movement is ipso facto inextricably engaged in a historical and cultural process. The recurrent question here is: does it preserve a critical, creative distance from its own socio-cultural world? This may be ascertained by tracing the particular Christian variant through which it actually participates in general cultural movements, or else from the absence of such a variant.

We can see this disharmony in the earliest faith and credal structures of the New Testament. From all the complexes of tradition converging there, however diverse in origin, it becomes evident that the first Christians found salvation in Jesus − salvation that was conclusive and imparted by God. In light of this experience they named that saving reality the Christ, the son of man, the Lord, and so forth. Thus they applied certain key concepts already current in their religious culture to Jesus, concepts which were 'vacant', so to
[050] speak, and which acquired their Christian meaning only when applied to him. In the first place they were expressing their reaction to whatever they picked up concerning Jesus' person, message and ministry; thus their actual experiences before and after his death were fused together in a single image. All the same, they obviously made use of existing concepts like messiah, son of

man, and so forth which carried their own distinctive meanings − historical accretions that were not in all respects applicable to Jesus; it is also obvious that, understanding Jesus as they did to be the very essence of final salvation, they deliberately modified these concepts in the very act of applying them to Jesus by amplifying them with recollections of his life and death here on earth. It must be said, therefore, that the New Testament criterion for designating or identifying Jesus was not the meaning already attached to the existing titles, but Jesus himself. It is the disciples' way of expressing their conviction that in him they had found their final salvation; and they do so in somewhat alien conceptual terms in order to express its proper nature.

There is a pronounced tension in this faith structure. For his part Jesus himself, the individual human being, was fully caught up in a developing situation, shifting and uncertain: a very specific historical tradition, namely that of his people, the Jews, who saw themselves as the 'people of God', God's servants, witnessing to him before the whole world. Within that tradition (so interpreted), Jesus sensed that he was responsible for his own place and particular task in it. But he also saw himself confronted with different interpretations already current in his environment of what 'people of God' and 'kingdom of God' might signify − an apocalyptic, an eschatological, an ethical, a politico-Zealotic and a Pharisaic interpretation (to mention only the principal ones). Within that diversity Jesus took a very personal stand, although it was his shameful execution in particular that made his message and his chosen way of life historically ambiguous. Apart from any ecclesiastic kerygma or credal formulation, this is a valid conclusion drawn from careful historical studies of the sources. Hence one must not lose sight of the historically contingent framework of Jesus' ministry when using the language of faith to speak of him as the messiah or Christ, son of man, Lord, Son of God and so on.

It is even less permissible to render the (biblical) articulation of what Jesus said and did in those concrete circumstances absolute in a quite unhistorical way by detaching it from the historically coloured speech categories of the time in which this Jesus event was verbalized: we cannot elevate this linguistic process into 'timeless categories'. Indeed, we are warned against that − in the [051]
New Testament itself − by the multiplicity of christological dogmas and diverse formulae used to refer to the kingdom of God, redemption and salvation in Christ. For on their side, too, the earliest congregations responding to Jesus found themselves in a quite specific cultural and religious context. Not only does the language of the original creeds and kerygmata (declarations of belief) share the historical ambiguity, but the very diversity of these creeds (under pressure, nonetheless, of the reality of the historical Jesus) is likewise conditioned primarily by what to human understanding are the historical ambiguity, manifold nuances and (rationally speaking) opaque character of

this self-same 'phenomenon of Jesus'; also conditioned by the religio-cultural concepts used by the first Christians, the further development of which was triggered partly by Jesus' actual ministry.

Hence it appears that from the outset the hermeneutic problem, or the problem of understanding a christological belief in Jesus of Nazareth, centres on a conflict. The problem is, first and foremost, a critical disharmony between the 'phenomenon of Jesus', his person, message, ministry and death − a richly variegated, extraordinary and distinctive life which, taken as a whole, can be interpreted historically in diverse ways − on the one hand, and on the other, the religious and cultural expectations, aspirations and ideologies present in his environment, with its own established key concepts, employed by other people to express in historically concrete terms what they were confronted with in Jesus, and eventually to record it in the New Testament and the subsequent history of the church. The hermeneutic problem is only secondarily a matter of how we can translate that which emerges in this disharmony as a real offer of salvation in Jesus Christ in terms of our contemporary (critically appraised) culture. The disharmony inherent in every credal statement and theology explains the diversity of the numerous christological responses, in the New Testament itself and in later church history. Thus the plurality, which at bottom is 'held together' by Jesus as he lived on earth and was apprehended by other people, has a twofold origin: (a) on the one hand the various religious and cultural circumstances and traditions of those who became Christians and (b) on the other, the amazing fascination which Jesus' person, life, message and death exerted on his disciples in all sorts of ways. Even during Jesus' lifetime this last factor gave rise to many different ideas and images of him, in which
[052] impressions of the milieu in which Jesus operated or of particular aspects of his person that fascinated his contemporaries were highlighted in a special manner. The disharmony inherent in this situation was more or less bound to entail that in the course of the church's history earlier religious answers (derived from the New Testament and conciliar definitions) which epitomize the disharmony between the salvation thus offered and its concrete expression in words should assume an independent status and themselves become the direct object of christological belief. In this way they may actually obscure the reality of Jesus, calling as it does on faith to interpret and imbue it with meaning. Thus there emerges a self-centred, formalized kerygma Christology which seems to forget that what is being proclaimed is not just the resurrection of one of the many who were crucified during that period, but the resurrection of Jesus alone from the dead. In the end some proponents of a kerygma theology could just as easily posit Barabbas, the so-called good thief, or at any rate John the Baptist as background to the formal Easter kerygma. But the kerygma proclaims only Jesus; which really means that it must be intrinsically

connected with Jesus as he lived on earth − with his person, message, way of life and death. Anyone who loses sight of that turns kerygma into myth. In other words, if we are asked what is meant by the 'eschatological salvation' granted by the crucified-and-risen one, we have to point to Jesus of Nazareth himself, his person and his whole life on earth and conduct up to and including his death if we are to give it substance and content.

C. THE CONSTANT UNITIVE FACTOR

From this fundamental disharmony we can see why the New Testament as it stands presents such a motley of interpretations of Jesus that go back to the first local communities of Christians: something happens one way in Mark, differently in Matthew and Luke, differently again in the case of Paul and in the Johannine gospel. Via the gospels and Paul it is possible to reconstruct, with a fair degree of certainty, a number of yet more primitive variations: a Hebrew and Judaeo-Greek Jerusalem Christology, a pre-Pauline Christology, a pre-Markan and pre-Johannine Christology and, finally, the Christology of the Q community, where the christological confession is often less developed though never totally absent. There is no trace of a non-dogmatic representation of Jesus anywhere. To look in the synoptic or pre-synoptic material for an [053] undogmatic, as it were 'undiluted' historical core (indeed, is there such a thing?) is to hunt a will-o'-the-wisp. Jesus features only as the subject of Christians' confession. We are always coming up against the Christian movement. So the question arises: what constant factor will create unity in this variegated whole?

There are a number of well-tried solutions. I begin by indicating where the solution cannot lie.

(a) Not in the gospels or in the whole New Testament as such. The canonical writings confront us with diverse Christologies. Looking only at their terminology, I cannot see any place where a constant unitive factor might be found on this plane. Could all these biblical Christologies, taken together, be normative? Formally, of course, they can, and for Christians the assertion that the entire Bible is normative is right and proper − but in itself it gets us nowhere. What are we to do, for instance, with the just as authentically biblical Christology of the son of man, when this initially so important apocalyptic term, first conferred on the risen Jesus coming as the son of man, vanishes from other parts of the New Testament and was not even incorporated, explicitly at any rate, into the Christian creed, whereas it once constituted the entire Christology of certain Graeco-Palestinian, Judaeo-Christian local congregations as far afield as Transjordania and Syria? A thoroughly scriptural orthodoxy does not entail conferring on Jesus all the images and titles

available. In practice, formal exegetical endorsement of the entire Bible's authority (whether Catholic or Protestant) only means that a particular component or single theme in the Bible is elevated above the rest, often in accordance with an individual's own confessional bent or personal preference, religious and theological. This brings us to a second unsatisfactory solution.

(b) The constant unitive factor is not the 'gospel within the Gospel', the best of the best in the New Testament. This criterion is very subjective, of course: it usually results in selection determined by confessional allegiance, and again gives rise to pluralism among Christian exegetes. Moreover, exponents of *Formgeschichte* often support this criterion with the postulate of a single 'proto-kerygma' from which diverse interpretations supposedly followed step by step, while there is good reason to assume that the various kerygmata of the local churches subsequently coalesced in the (ecumenical) credal confession of the emerging 'great church' (see later sections).

[054] (c) For the same reasons it is impossible for the earliest picture of Jesus that we could reconstruct to function as a norm or constant unitive factor. However important the earliest tradition may be (even if there were not diverse 'earliest pictures of Jesus' in circulation from the very start), the first articulated experience of recognizing-and-remembering is not ipso facto the richest or most subtle one, although as a delimiting and admonitory factor it is still important for the evolutionary process in which people try to verbalize ever more precisely the richness of their actual experience. Later that first articulation turns out to have been imperfect after all, and incomplete compared with the impression someone actually made upon us, which is realized fully only in retrospect. Early and subsequent articulations of an experience often provide a reciprocal critique. Thus in Mark it is fairly evident (especially from structural analysis) that while he certainly believes in Jesus as the Christ and above all as the Son of God, it is always with the proviso that these concepts refer to the meaning of the 'suffering son of man'. Obviously this presupposes theological critique of one-sided representations of Jesus.

(d) Nor can Jesus' self-awareness be a unitive factor or criterion. By self-awareness − as distinct from self-understanding − I mean his psychology, his inner life and character. Of this we know very little. We can get to know quite a lot about Jesus' understanding of himself, albeit indirectly, from his proclamation of the kingdom of God, his insistence on 'discipleship', his intercourse with social and religious 'outcasts', his parables confronting the Jews with a decisive choice, and so forth. Jesus' self-understanding in his relationship with God and with other people is indeed of capital importance. But the notion of total power and authority or *exousia,* at least as applying even to the earthly Jesus, is clearly a redactional element in Mark. It is only by way of the 'disclosure' experience which the disciples underwent that we are able to

discover what gave rise to it. There is always a historically situated intermediary factor, Christian or ecclesiastic.

(e) Again, the so-called sayings and acts of Jesus (*ipsissima verba et facta*) are not to be considered a criterion and unitive factor. Even if historically authentic sayings and actions of Jesus can be distilled from Scripture, they were chosen by local Christian communities who make no mention of his other sayings and deeds. So once again it is only via their interpretive selection that we get anywhere near Jesus. What is more, even the few so-called directly historical words and deeds of Jesus appear in the gospels in an ecclesiastic context; the [055] particular context in which Jesus uttered or performed them cannot usually − and can never fully – be recovered. Without the situational context of this or that saying (except, up to a point, with parables) one can arrive at many different interpretations; and no one can determine what it 'really' means. For the same reasons Jesus' alleged 'radicalism' or the non-Judaizing character of synoptic and earlier traditions cannot be a criterion, either. The traits in question may be based on scientific postulates. Someone who starts by accepting various early Christian traditions can actually see a 'radicalizing' process in a biased emphasis on a single tradition, not yet criticized or corrected by other Jesus traditions. In other words, they are still purely hypothetical and possibly unreliable criteria. The radicalizing may just as well derive from certain local churches and not from Jesus.

(f) Lastly, no constant unitive factor is provided by credal statements and homologues in the Bible. How quickly the expression 'son of man' disappears, does it not? It does not appear in any credal affirmation. And what is the relevance of Davidic messianism for non-Jewish, Hellenistic Christians? Then again, there is both pluralism and development in these biblical confessions of faith; sometimes it would seem that Jesus only is given the status of Christ, Messiah and Lord after the resurrection; at other times the idea of 'assumption' comes into play. Jesus, having died, held 'in readiness' by God, will presently return as son of man, a judge armed with authority and power: 'Heaven had to receive him until the time of the restoration of all things,' says Acts 3:21;[3] in yet other instances we discern an incarnation Christology and a pre-existent Christ. In these credos and liturgical hymns everything cannot have the same normative value, and certainly not at one and the same time: either one must reject parts of the Bible or else arrive at an artificial compilation, a kind of

[3] Although this text in Acts has in part been influenced by the 'rapture' model which Luke employs (and in the New Testament this is something recent; see in a later chapter), the idea itself (of the *assumptio*-model) is much older. Apart from the ending added later (Mk. 16:9-20) the Markan gospel supports the view of Jesus as risen, *appointed* but not yet *inaugurated* as son of man, who is to *appear* only at the close of the age (see Th. J. Weeden, *Mark-traditions in conflict*, Philadelphia 1971; see later). Luke himself is here 'Christianizing' a speculation, familiar to the Baptist's followers, concerning Elijah (see Part Three, Section Two, n. 41).

aggregate that as such has nothing to do with the actual Scriptures. It is true, of course, that the meaning of one title eventually gets transferred to other titles, so that in the end they all become nebulous and they all try to express everything about Jesus. But in that case, what precisely does 'everything' mean? By defining something an articulation also delimits it; but if all these titles say everything, they run the risk of becoming so many meaningless, formalized expressions. Besides the liturgical credos, the pre-synoptic traditions also contain transmitted elements of the *memoria Jesu*, especially with regard to his miracles and his message of the approaching kingdom of God, as well as to his conduct and way of life. Are these less prescriptive or
[056] constitutive for the church community than the formal creeds?

From this negative result it is at once evident that a (modern) christological interpretation of Jesus cannot proceed from the kerygma (or dogma) about Jesus, and even less from a so-called 'purely historical' Jesus of Nazareth, even though a historico-critical approach, informed by an intention of faith, remains the only proper starting point. Since all these attempts have proved unsatisfactory, what is left in the way of a constant unitive factor? I would say (and that is saying quite a lot): the Christian movement itself! In other words, a *Christian oneness of experience* which does *indeed derive its unity from the one figure of Jesus*, while remaining pluriform in its verbal expression or articulation. 'You yourselves,' Paul writes to the Christians at Corinth, 'are an open letter from Christ − written not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts' (2 Cor. 3:2-3). By oneness of experience I mean not an individual or individualistic religious experience of Jesus, a sort of 'revivalism', but a community experience in the sense of an ecclesial or collective experience which obliges people to define the ultimate meaning and purport of their lives in reference to Jesus of Nazareth or, to put it in traditional and equally proper terms, which causes people to interpret Jesus' life as the definitive or eschatological activity of God in history for the salvation or deliverance of mankind. The constant factor here is that particular groups of people find their ultimate salvation imparted by God in Jesus of Nazareth. In other words, in and through that experience one can see two aspects in the life of Jesus: (a) his life has an effect on the contemporary historical situation of Christian congregations, and (b) his life is crucial for the fundamental option presented by life here on earth and therefore for eschatological communion with God. In addition we see that determining the final, definitive meaning of our own life in reference to Jesus of Nazareth is not something given or appropriated once and for all. It is a decision that a person must make over and over again in light of the circumstances, and must continually re-articulate. That is to say, one cannot formalize a kerygma, like 'Jesus is Lord'. One has to make Jesus the prescriptive, determining factor in one's life in accordance with changing

situations, cultural, social and ecclesiastic: and in that context one will proceed to live, experience and put into words what 'making Jesus the determining factor' really entails here and now. For Christians from a Jewish background the 'words' in question included Lord (*mar*), son of man and messiah; and this had far-reaching consequences for their faith and life. It might be more [057] accurate to say that they described him in that way because they felt these consequences to be meaningful for their day-to-day life 'in Jesus'. To Greek Christians those titles meant nothing; but from their Caesar cult they were familiar with *'Kyrios',* so for them it is not the emperor but Jesus who is *Kyrios.* That meant a great deal.

Thus the Jesus event lies at the origin of the experience of local congregations to which we have historical access; and it governs that communal experience. To put it differently: the constant factor is the evolving life of the 'church of God' or 'church of Christ', the church-building experience prompted by the impact Jesus had and, in the Spirit, continues to have on his followers, people who have experienced ultimate salvation in Jesus of Nazareth. Priority must be conceded to what is actually offered in Jesus; but this is embedded, vested in the assent of faith given by the Christian community, which we experience as present in our midst in history. We might say: Jesus was such as to engender precisely that typical reaction of faith which was confirmed by these local church experiences.

D. DISHARMONY BETWEEN JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

What are the implications of all this? Firstly, I would think, that one cannot see God's revelation in Jesus primarily in an infallibly inspired Bible which, as God's direct word, is alleged − on the basis of what is (wrongly) described as its literal meaning (exegetical analysis often reveals that meaning to be very different from what was at first supposed) – to be normative for us. Revelation is God's saving activity both as experienced and as expressed in words. In that verbalizing process the Old Testament plays an essential role; for Jesus is referred to in the New Testament as the prophet, the son of man, the exalted one, the Lord − all of them notions grounded in the Old Testament or in pre- and non-Christian Judaism of the post-Old Testament period. The New Testament is the Christian interpretation of what people had experienced with Jesus and were still experiencing in local Christian communities, admittedly in light of the Old Testament. This Christian exegesis of the Old Testament partly explains the multiplicity of New Testament interpretations of Jesus, which led to diverse Christologies, a process that was to continue to some extent in patristic theology.

The question arises: where is the Bible's authority located? My reply is two- [058]

pronged.

Firstly, the New Testament as a document is set in the life of a movement and gives us a close-up of that life during the specific − and lengthy − period of its initial crystallization (from the chronologically first piece of writing to the last, a period of some fifty to sixty years). This in itself shows that the New Testament has no independent authority in its own right. It is the deposit of a 'movement' which, albeit within the Old Testament scriptural tradition, existed before the New Testament writings and simply continued after them. The living church community is the normative testimony that Jesus gave us (see 2 Cor. 3:2-3). Furthermore, it is possible to view the movement revolving around Jesus − and the early Jerusalem and Palestinian congregations did so view it − as a phenomenon inside Judaism itself, even though eschatologically (in line with Old Testament traditions: e.g. Is. 2:2-5) the pagans were called (by God) to share it (Mt. 8:10-11 and parallels). But the Christian movement goes on developing in contingent, historical circumstances. Thus the witness of the New Testament turns out to be simply the deposit of particular communal experiences during that very period, which relativizes its authority.

On the other hand there is something irreplaceable, something unique in the New Testament. After all, it gives us the most direct, uniquely practicable and historically most reliable access to the original event, the Christian *movement* that took its impetus from Jesus of Nazareth. The initial disclosure experience of the first Christians, some of whom had already died by then, is presented freshly in the New Testament via reliable traditions: there are even some happenings on record that were embarrassing for the Christian communities and their leaders and so would not have been constantly in their minds. The first generations of Christians believed that this Jesus (i.e. a historical reality) is the *Christ* (i.e. a 'disclosure', expressed in a Jewish term evocative for them). They see their loftiest expectations and utopias realized concretely in Jesus. Neither Jesus nor the earliest 'church community' constitutes the fount and origin of Christianity, but both together – offer and response. No Christianity without Jesus, but equally, no Christianity without Christians. This source event – the establishment of the Christian church − does indeed have normative value: in its New Testament the early church reflects or mirrors the impact of the Jesus event on a group of people. Sustained contact with the primary response to an initial offer in history remains normative, therefore, for
[059] one's personal response. In that sense, there can be no substitute for the New Testament's authority as the church's 'charter' or foundation document. If the Catholic interpretation that the church is the sole living relic of Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore the norm for our understanding of the faith, might be called a splendid intuition of faith (being indirectly corroborated by historical criticism), then the Reformation principle of the inalienable normative value of

the biblical witnesses finds similar critical confirmation. The two interpretations merge into one: Protestants acknowledge the Bible as the 'book of the church'[4] and the dogmatic constitution, *Dei Verbum*, of Vatican II recognizes that not even the church's magisterium is 'lord' over Scripture, but is 'subject' to God's revelation as articulated by Christians in the Bible.[5] Because the congregation-based experiences deposited in Scripture are the constant factor which holds the whole New Testament with its plural Christologies together, the New Testament as a document − and in its totality at that − is to some extent part and parcel of this unitive factor. Thus the interpretive norm provided by Scripture can only be rendered more specific via the method of systematic coordination: in that way the biblical text, insofar as it actually mirrors the life of diverse Christian congregations, is the interpretive norm. Something else must be added to that. Despite internal disharmonies the New Testament affords a relatively coherent picture, which can be seen as a result of the historical effect of the one Jesus at the source of somewhat dissonant traditions on the one hand, and on the other as the expression of an 'ecumenical' desire to align the diverse original Christian traditions into a unity. For us, too, this ecumenical desire for unification, which is noticeable in the synoptics and perhaps even in pre-synoptic traditions, is, therefore, an indispensable element of the interpretive norm.[6]

All this implies, moreover, that the historical process of the Christian response to Jesus was not concluded when the New Testament canon was finally fixed. Again and again this process stands in the way of any exaggerated ascription of authority to the Bible. Even within the New Testament one Christian congregation will present a critique, through the mouth of its evangelist, of the articulation of other congregations: we see, for instance, how Matthew and Luke make free use of what is after all Markan material − classified now as 'New Testament material'. No trace of biblicism, then, in the Bible itself; rather the contrary. So how can we make a biblicist appeal to Scripture? Biblicism is unbiblical.

Thus the New Testament − in its normative value, grounded in the experience of the 'churches of Christ' − turns out to be in no sense a depository [060] of eternal, literally unalterable truths that (as regards language and expression) only need to be hermeneutically interpreted for our times. Rather it is a differentiated whole of diverse christological responses to what Jesus offers, a

[4] E.g. W. Marxsen, *Das Neue Testament als Buch der Kirche* (Gütersloh 1966), and *Der Streit um die Bibel* (Gladbeck 1965).
[5] Dogmatic Constitution 'Dei Verbum', no. 10.
[6] I see this expressed in the fact that pre-synoptic, single-item formulae, deriving from diverse local church traditions, coalesce in the New Testament into more complex formulations of belief; this is evidently the result of synthetic critique, tending towards a unitive picture of Jesus within the universal church.

diversity that is intrinsically limited by the historical offer itself and so by the *memoria Jesu,* but is nonetheless evoked by new historical situations. The transition from a Jewish Christianity to a 'gentile' one, for instance, produces a new Christology, a new 'image' of Jesus in the Bible itself − yet still within the bounds of the *memoria Jesu*. It is not just a matter of the gift of Christianity being conveyed to the gentiles; Christianity itself is enriched in the process and thus acquires a new form and aspect, a distinctive and as yet wholly new response (with new problems in its train!). Even in the biblical context, then, the conclusion is obvious: a critical relationship with present circumstances is part of the christological response to Jesus. This relationship partly determines the Christology: the 'things remembered of Jesus' remain a governing principle, but are fertilized by current issues. Later on, in a concrete situation and in terms of his Middle Platonic philosophy − generally prevalent in orthodox Christian circles too − Arius obliged the Christian community to use an originally semi-gnostic term *(homoousia,* consubstantiality) in order to preserve the *memoria Jesu* faithfully in view of the questions being asked. The church was not consistent regarding the philosophy of Middle Platonism (philosophically Arius was the most consistent); but the church was faithful to the community experience in the grip of the *anamnesis* of Jesus. Thus Christian allegiance to Jesus broke down the − even for orthodox Christians − universal self-evidence of this philosophy.[7] The 'heretics' were not infrequently the most consistent regarding the concretely given philosophical hermeneutic horizon inherent in the system itself, which Christians, too, took as their point of departure; but with the 'orthodox' the logical coherence of a philosophical system carried less weight than the *memoria Jesu Christi* as this appears, for example, in the gospels, in liturgical prayer (e.g. the third person of the Trinity) or in popular devotion (e.g. the *homoousia* of Christ with God) and the praxis (actual conduct) of local Christian churches, concretely expressed in their way of life. In that way, and at that critical moment in history, they rescued Christianity and at the same time exposed the philosophical falseness of the model currently in use. Subsequently, in a different philosophical horizon or experiential context, 'heretics' − who historically had chosen the wrong
[061] alternative − were given credit for being right when their basically Christian intention came to be detached from the obligatory philosophy of an earlier period. Often enough their heresy was not directly christological, but rather a failure to give the last word to faith instead of philosophy.

All this means that the present with its contemporary empirical models (also just a fleeting element in the onward movement of history) has to be the place where we Christians make our christological response. Proclamation and

[7] See especially Fr. Ricken, 'Das Homoousis von Nikaia als Krisis des alt christlichen Piatonismus', in *Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie* (Quaest. Disp., 51) (Freiburg 1970), 74-99.

theology must always have a time index. The fact that our age yearns for peace and justice, for *shalom,* for liberation of what is unliberated, will rightly − and fundamentally − give our Jesus-image an articulation all its own, but within the bounds set by the 'remembrance of Jesus'. To proclaim him as the great political revolutionary is to contradict the *memoria Jesu* (as well as the results of critical study) and is simply projecting our (possibly justified) aspirations onto him. On the other hand, because the constant factor in Christianity is that Christians determine the final or ultimate meaning of their concrete history in reference to Jesus of Nazareth, the new 'exegete' of God and champion of man, the immediate significance of that life, the splendid expectations of our century − the demand for a more just world − rightly help to define our image of Jesus. Did not the first Jewish Christians also assimilate their religious and human (messianic) expectations into their Jesus image? It should not and cannot be otherwise, if the gist of the basic christological affirmation is God's definitive saving action in our history in and through Jesus, or Jesus as the definitive source of meaning of human existence in this world. If we fail to do this, we are putting our faith in a purely ideological, abstract or magical kerygma: 'Jesus is the Lord.' Hence the eschatological solidarity and unity of all human beings, of all peoples must become an exemplary, expansive and active reality in the Christian churches of today in service to the world: ' … the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.'[8]

Thus the things that people experience and expect these days are one constituent of our response to 'But whom do you say that I am?'; just as, when it came to proclaiming Jewish Christianity to the gentiles, the Hellenistic situation had a directly hermeneutic function for the question concerning the significance of the Christian gospel for gentile Christians. Otherwise how was it possible, four centuries after the New Testament had been completed, for yet another dogma − a revelational truth − to come into being, and to do so in terms of a post-biblical philosophy (Chalcedon)? Revelation as a genuine 'public disclosure' is actually accomplished only in the response of faith made [062] in a very concrete situation with its own conceptual horizon and field of inquiry. And our questions are other than those of times past.

Conclusion: Together with the reality offered by Jesus, in and through Jesus alive in the church with its living remembrance of Jesus of Nazareth, interpretation from within the current situation is a constituent of what we call God's disclosure of salvation in Jesus Christ. When we take into account the structure that characterizes the 'naming' of Jesus by Christians in the New Testament, and the way that structure changes in light of the continually

[8] Dogmatic Constitution 'Lumen Gentium', no. 1.

shifting experience of God's gift of salvation in Jesus, it is in full accord with the gospel for us, with a like experience of salvation, to give Jesus new names. The basic religio-cultural categories of our period are as apt for that purpose as those of earlier ages, but with the same proviso: that they be adapted according to the yardstick of the historical reality that is Jesus himself, for whom 'God's cause' is essentially 'the cause of man' and who is therefore wholly on God's side and wholly on man's. This saving reality can be assessed from various perspectives, which is why even in early Christianity some very diverse images of Jesus emerged that may sometimes strike us as contradictory. But standards of what constitutes contradiction and non-contradiction in the worldview of the ancient East and Asia Minor differed from those of Western people today.[9]

§2 Jesus of Nazareth, acclaimed as the Christ, 'object' of historico-critical inquiry

Literature. Since the debate between R. Bultmann and E. Kasemann (the 'new Quest' or the post-liberal pursuit of the historical Jesus) a vast body of literature on the subject has been written; hence only a few of the most significant studies are mentioned here.

R. Baumann, *2000 Jahre danach. Eine Bestandsaufnahme zur Sache Jesu,* Stuttgart 1971; Th. Boman, *Die Jesus-Ueberlieferung im Lichte der neueren Volkskunde,* Göttingen 1967; R. Bultmann, 'Das Verhältnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus', in *Der historische Jesus und der*
[063] *kerygmatische Christus* (eds H. Ristow & K Matthiae) (Berlin 1960), 233-235 (and passim); N. A. Dahl, 'Der historische Jesus als geschichtswissenschaftliches und theologisches Problem', in KuD I (1956), 109-137; H. Diem, *Der irdische Jesus und der Christus des Glaubens,* Tübingen 1957; G. Ebeling, 'Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus und das Problem der Christologie', in ZThK 56 (1959), 14-30; E. Fuchs, *Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus,* in *Gesammelte Aufsätze,* II, (Tübingen 1960), 143-167; H. Grass, 'Historisch-kritische Forschung und Dogmatik', in *Theologie und Kritik* (Göttingen 1969), 9-27; F. Hahn, W. Lohff, G. Bornkamm, *Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus und die Eigenart der uns zur Verfügung stehenden Quellen* (Evang. Forum, 2), Göttingen 1962; E. Heitsch, 'Die

[9] See W.S. Haas, *The destiny of mind, East and West* (London 1965) (= *Oestliches und westliches Denken,* Hamburg 1957), and H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago 1948), VII-VIII. The ground of 'oriental tolerance' lies in its vision, according to which totally divergent 'systems' can nonetheless articulate a similar basic intuition. Eventually the so-called 'participation idea' came from the East into Western philosophy, but with another, 'un-Eastern' meaning. It is easier for Orientals than for Westerners to detect a deeper *unity* in divergent systems. One fact in the church's history – the creation of a 'canon' of New Testament writings – expresses this intuition of unity without giving it a concrete name. But this was clear: the one thing which this plurality of interpretations addressed is the one Jesus of Nazareth.

Aporie des historischen Jesus als Problem theologischer Hermeneutik', in ZThK 53 (1956), 192-210; E. Käsemann, 'Das Problem des historischen Jesus', in *Besinnungen* (I), 187-213; 'Die Anfänge christlicher Theologie', in loc. cit. (II), 82-104; and 'Sackgassen im Streit um den historischen Jesus', in loc. cit. (II), 31-68; L. E. Keck, *A future for the historical Jesus,* Nashville-New York 1971; W. G. Kümmel, 'Jesus-forschung seit 1950', in ThR 31 (1965-66), 15-46, 289-315, and: *Das Neue Testament im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine Forschungsbericht* (SBS, 50), Stuttgart 1970; G. Lindeskog, 'Christus-kerygma und Jesustradition', in NovT 5 (1962), 144-156; W. Marxsen, 'Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus', in ThZ 87 (1962), 575-588, and 'Jesus, oder das Neue Testament', in *Der Exeget als Theologe* (Gütersloh 1968), 246-264; H. Meyer, 'Die theologische Relevanz der historisch-kritischen Methode', in *Kransbacher Gespräch der lutherischen Bischofskonferenz zur Auseinandersetzung um die Bibel,* Berlin-Hamburg 1967[2]; F. Muszner, 'Der historische Jesus und der Christus des Glaubens', in BZ I (1957), 224-252; H. Ott, *Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus und die Ontologie der Geschichte,* Zürich 1960; James Robinson, *The New Quest of the historical Jesus,* Naperville, 1959; J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 9-50; S. Schulz, 'Die neue Frage nach dem historischen Jesus', in *Neues Testament und Geschichte* (O. Cullmann, 70th birthday) (Tübingen 1972), 33-42; H. Schürmann, 'Zur aktuellen Situation der Leben-Jesu-Forschung', in GuL 46 (1973), 300-310; G. Strecker, 'Die historische und theologische Problematik der Jesusfrage', in EvTh 29 (1969), 453-476; P. Stuhlmacher, 'Kritische Marginalien zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Frage nach Jesus', in *Fides et Communicatio* (Festschrift for M. Doerne) (Göttingen 1970), 341-361; A. Vögtle, 'Die historische und theologische Tragweite der heutigen Evangelienforschung', in ZKTh 86 (1964), 385-417; *Jesus ou le Christ* (Foi vivante, 130), Paris 1970.

A. DIVERSE IMAGES OF JESUS AND JESUS AS OBJECT OF HISTORICAL INQUIRY [064]

From what we have said it is evident that every period has its own way of representing Jesus. That was already the case in the various phases of early Christianity, but the process continued well beyond that. Just as the letter to the Hebrews already depicts him as the heavenly high priest; the early fathers as God 'who became man in order to make man divine' and give him everlasting life; Byzantium as 'Christus Victor', Pantocrator and sun god, 'Light of light'; so in the early and high Middle Ages he became the one who makes reparation or satisfaction, who has ransomed us, and simultaneously the 'Jesus of the *via crucis'* and the Christmas manger. Later on, for Luther, he was the one who achieved reconciliation with God in a free and sovereign act that absolves our guilt and invites us to rely unconditionally on God's

favourable verdict; then came the Christ mystique of the incarnate Word in seventeenth century French spirituality, the veneration of the 'childhood of Jesus' and of 'Christ, the Sacred Heart'; the Enlightenment saw in him the prototype of human morality, the basis of true human community; the Romantics felt he was the model of a genuinely human personality; and our twentieth century with its now fully fledged *raison d'état* proceeded to extol him as Christ the king; then, after this triumphalism and the experience of two world wars, came Jesus 'our brother', our fellow man, whose example shows us what we have to do, the 'man for others' and the contemporary 'Jesus of human liberation' (in some quarters even 'Jesus the combatant and revolutionary'); et cetera. Just as in the course of history people have continually given God new names as inventive love alone knows how to do, while his name has also been sullied and besmirched in many different ways, so Christian love has enabled each and every period to find its own endearment, even though his name is forever being horribly misused: in his name brothers have been slaughtered, and in ships with the name 'Jesus' emblazoned on their standard black slaves have been stowed away like cattle destined for the white man's territories. Our 'Jesus images' indeed call for criticism, indispensable though they are for our decisive choice to follow Jesus. This surely applies to nonbelievers as well: not just belief but unbelief, too, has its own dogmatic Jesus image. The Jewish authorities and Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus because they had formed a certain picture of him for
[065] themselves. Even prior to the Eastertide events there were 'images of Jesus', both positive and negative. It is only once a person has been interpreted that he becomes part of history.

The question emerging from this cursory survey of Jesus images is whether all these christological patterns are simply projections of our currently prevailing, constantly changing worldview. Once somebody has found ultimate salvation in Jesus, it is natural (and proper) that he should project his own expectations and conceptions of 'true humanity' onto Jesus. Correlatively, of course, this means that a real facet of Jesus' life must at least point in that particular direction if we are not to turn Jesus into a mere receptacle for our own predilections, an arbitrary 'cipher' that we manipulate; in that case, surely, Jesus might well be left out of it. He becomes indispensable only if and when the really crucial point of our human existence and its proper destiny are actually defined by the historical phenomenon of the real Jesus of Nazareth, and our own projections of true humanity are corrected by that; in that context there is legitimate room for human projections − always subject to the corrective and directive criterion of what and who Jesus actually was in history. Thus the historical truth in the quest for Jesus of Nazareth becomes a vital issue.

B. OLD AND NEW: THE CRITICAL APPROACH

The fact of the matter is that in the past the faithful − the Christian community, theologians, the church's teaching office − have seen all the New Testament traditions about Jesus as directly reflecting actual historical occurrences. The responses from theology and believers were based on a pre-critical, purely biblicist interpretation of the Jesus event, ignoring, for instance, the different literary genres. Every period inevitably suffers from the limitations of its own historical context − which in no way rules out the possibility of authentic belief. It only goes to show that Christian belief has a real history and that the faith cannot be fixed once and for all, as it were, super-historically.

In our modern period historical consciousness with its own critical methods has made quite a dent in the pre-critical or biblicist interpretation. Only then – and not before − did the possibility arise of what one might call a rigid and conservative interpretation of the Bible. For as we see, despite a pre-critical [066] consciousness of history, the church fathers, for instance, and the Middle Ages as well did not in any way insist on what now passes for conservative biblical interpretation: through their allegorical interpretation of what appear to be historical narratives in the Bible they permitted themselves liberties to which the most progressive exegete would never concede nowadays. 'Conservative' biblical interpretation, therefore, is a strictly modern option, that is, a 'no' to the newly arisen challenge posed by historico-critical consciousness; in that sense it is 'modernistic', a new phenomenon in the history of biblical interpretation.

But the historico-critical approach to the Bible is also a new, modern possibility. To some extent the ways in which the faithful had come to represent the concrete Jesus of Nazareth did not tally with the results yielded by a historical approach to scientifically assured data. For that reason many people feel that their Christian faith compels them to oppose the critical results of scientific studies. That is always a hopeless and fruitless enterprise, because it is impossible to live with a 'double truth': you cannot deny something as a historian which you are bound to accept as a believer. Faith cannot hold back what is scientifically evident, but neither can scientific evidence contradict faith's *representations*. Although there is a large body of established data commanding the general agreement of historians, there is undoubtedly still a lot of uncertainty about details. But to belittle historical science from a religious standpoint or to point to uncertainty in the sciences as grounds for setting them aside is unfair and unworthy of the believer. This in itself discloses a false conception of faith. Of course, historically speaking we know much less nowadays about Jesus of Nazareth than our forefathers did, but what we do know is scientifically vouched for. Besides, it is still more than enough to

situate the historical basis of Christianity and enable us to understand the Christian interpretation of Jesus better.

At any rate, nobody will deny that, especially in the nineteenth century, historical and critical study often had an underlying anti-dogmatic or anti-ecclesiastic purpose, and once there is such a religious intention those who seek to popularize these new insights often have too little feeling for the accustomed ways of the faithful and their powers of assimilation. On the other hand − in the best interests of the Christian faith − one cannot remain silent about the results of criticism. Christian faith has nothing to lose and much to gain from new, empirical truth.

[067] C. MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND JESUS OF NAZARETH

From 1774 to 1778 onwards the work of Reimarus dramatically changed traditional religious images of Jesus. The very idea was so novel that Reimarus did not publish his work. Later on Lessing, though still with some misgiving and therefore 'anonymously', published seven fragments of Reimarus's manuscript, which proposed that the actual historical Jesus presents a very different picture from that of the Bible and Christian tradition. L. Ranke (1795-1886) formulated the new historical concept which emerged during that period, namely that the image people had formed of Louis IX, for instance, or of other celebrated persons in the past, does not tally with the picture we get from a critical study of the historical sources. Thus a distinction was introduced between, for example, the current notion of Alexander the Great and the 'Alexander of history', between Napoleon and the 'Napoleon of history', between the Christian Jesus image and the historical 'Jesus of Nazareth'. Inevitably it became a question of 'the way things really were' (Ranke) − a critical force in the study of history not previously known in that sense. Unhappily, this premise was given a positivistic interpretation, partly modelled on of the so-called exact sciences: it was considered feasible to prise a fact loose from the interpretation given it by people living at the time, from the course of later tradition, and from one's own hermeneutic horizon. So by surrendering their own presuppositions in order to submit the historical data to critical analysis based on the principles of the exact sciences, people thought, it should be possible to arrive at an un-dogmatized, purely historical Jesus. On closer inspection, however, this Jesus of the historians turned out to be a nineteenth century projection of idealized notions of humanity: Jesus became a kind of mascot, a symbolic X or cipher onto which the nineteenth century could project its utopian evolutionist optimism; or else he was seen simply as representing first century Palestinian apocalypticism .

Even so, this uncovered a real problem: the 'historical Jesus' indeed differed

in many respects from the Christ of faith. The term 'historical Jesus' here refers to that which the methods of historical criticism enable us to retrieve of Jesus of Nazareth, that is, the 'earthly Jesus'. However, nineteenth century liberal positivism tended to identify 'being' with 'being aware of'. Consequently [068] historical reality was taken to coincide with what we can know on the basis of a science of history. History became synonymous with its scientific study, hence 'historical' is whatever has been ascertained by systematic research. That in itself narrows the field of vision; for there is a real difference between the 'historical Jesus' and the 'earthly Jesus': what can be reconstructed historically (the 'historical Jesus') naturally does not coincide with the full reality of Jesus, the person who lived when the beginning of the first century was still the 'present time'.

Of course, one could fairly say that in practice this distinction, however real, is now irrelevant, because what escapes the historical net does in fact vanish into oblivion as far as we are concerned. (With finer meshes or more refined historical methods we can, of course, catch more in the historian's net; but the result will never be identical with what the living reality had been: 'what was going on' at the time.) In the study and writing of history we are dealing only with historically knowable happenings; and although these do not coincide with what actually happened, it is futile to peer 'behind' historically accessible facts, or to think that a religious angle will somehow give us access to further *historical* aspects. Faith does not of itself supply any new − and real − facts; it can reveal their real significance, which a purely historical assessment fails to discover. Yet the idea that only the historical method can get at the facts often implicitly lays claim to ontological exclusivity. Not only are there events which are accessible to the historian but have not yet been investigated, but the science of history can never recover everything that really occurred. Less pretentiously, then, we may call those events 'historical' which are ascertainable by means of the historical method. This means that the actual stuff of all historiography is 'abstract', a slice excised from the real past; it formalizes and yields only images. Thus the so-called historical Jesus is no less a Jesus image than the Christ of the believer. This at once mitigates the sharp contrast supposed to exist between the 'Jesus of history' and the 'Jesus of faith'. Via images, they both derive from the 'earthly Jesus'.

As an epistemological category, that is methodologically, historical abstraction is perfectly legitimate, provided one does not turn it into an ontological category. In the latter case one insulates oneself in advance against everything that may be said, also in non-scientific terms, about historians' findings. In other words, one still cannot deny reality to the 'non-historical' (in [069] the sense of what is scientifically inaccessible in past events). In interpreting the past allowance may indeed be made for 'history' which, however real, is no

longer accessible to the historian or is even in principle irrecoverable. Thus the historian cannot, in principle, ascertain whether 'history' is the locus of God's saving activity, whereas this may be a reality in the dimension of the actual events − and for the believer is truly so. Occurrent reality (='the course of historical events') is broader than what 'history' (=professional historians) is able to recover of it, without denigrating the 'interpretation' as purely subjective and, in that sense, speculative.

In regard to Jesus of Nazareth this means that, 'historically', that is, in the occurrent reality of his earthly existence, there is something which is fundamentally inaccessible to purely historico-critical methods: the real-life individual who in himself (like everyone else) eludes a purely scientific approach. In Jesus' case this 'something', experienced in the encounter with him, was expressed by Christians in images such as son of man, messianic son of David, and so forth. The only question, then, is whether this articulation is indeed partly *determined* by the concrete reality that they encountered in Jesus, or derives solely from the socio-cultural context in which these people were situated. One is bound to ask, therefore, whether their image of Jesus, arising out of their faith, is both the product of the real historical offer constituted by Jesus and (naturally) the result of their tradition − the process in which they interpreted and assented to this concrete offer and consciously appropriated it.

The post-liberal 'New Quest', the renewed historical search for Jesus of Nazareth, is engaged in this second, new inquiry. Of course, the sole reason we go in quest of the historical Jesus is that we cannot ignore two thousand years of Christendom: the context of our inquiry is the Christianity of the churches today. So we are really inquiring into the historical basis and source of what we have called the 'Christian movement', which still constitutes the distinctive reality of the churches. And we do this because with the passage of time the Christian churches have evolved a fractured relationship with their source. Because of that fracture, the initial effect of a historico-critical interpretation of
[070] Jesus will be to startle and even perturb: it endangers our Christian identity, shaped but also distorted by the course of history. Yet the disconcerting experience of surprise is a first and necessary stage in the hermeneutic process that leads from the biblical answer to the question of who Jesus is to our answer. Even in the Bible itself we see this sense of surprise at pre-canonical traditions in the community. Of course we can never pinpoint the authentic gift of Jesus 'in itself': Jesus' offer to people some two thousand years ago is concretely not the same as his − nonetheless permanent − offer of salvation to twentieth century people; after all, our need for deliverance and salvation derives its historical content from our real-life circumstances. As I said before: if Jesus is God's definitive act of salvation for us now, as he was for the people of his day, then this entails that his relationship to the ever new present must

partly determine the concrete form of his offer. I think that some endeavours by proponents of the so-called 'New Quest' retain liberal vestiges, so that they are still really looking for a 'phantom', a sort of Jesus of Nazareth *an sich.* And this seems to me not only a futile enterprise but one devoid of any prospect for theology, for a critique of church and society and above all for religion itself.

All the same, acceptance or non-acceptance of the historico-critical method is a matter of life or death for Christianity. If, for instance, Jesus either did not exist (as was sometimes argued) or was quite different from what faith affirms of him (e.g. a *sicarius* or guerrilla, a Zealot or Jewish nationalist resistance fighter), then the faith or *kerygma* is obviously implausible. A radical disparity between the knowledge imparted by faith and that imparted by history about what after all is a single phenomenon, namely Jesus and his first believing disciples, is untenable. Such dualism inevitably leads to repudiating one of the poles (or at any rate its theological relevance), whether one proceeds, with Kierkegaard and Bultmann, to deny all *theological* significance to knowledge of the historical Jesus, or whether, following D. F. Strauss, one dispenses with *kerygma*-centred knowledge, or like H. Braun locates the biblical 'constant factor' in anthropology and the variable factor (the diverse *kerygmata:* son of man, Son of God, messiah, etc.) in Christology (which then becomes superfluous).

If Christian faith is faith in Jesus of Nazareth, in the sense that our attitude to him definitively settles our choice for or against God, or to put it in biblical terms, if it is faith in Jesus of Nazareth *confessed as* the 'Christ, the only begotten Son, our Lord', then religious knowledge and confession are indeed limited by our knowledge of the historical Jesus; and that knowledge in its turn is limited, [071] that is, put in its place or kept within its proper bounds, by religious interpretation.

D. THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORICAL QUEST FOR JESUS

In contrast to R. Bultmann, who is by no means sceptical about the possibility of a systematic and historical reconstruction of 'Jesus of Nazareth' but who denies its theological relevance, post-Bultmann exegesis, especially since E. Käsemann, has rightly played down the distinction between 'Jesus of Nazareth' and the 'Christ of the church'. This trend has become fairly general. Early *Formgeschichte* looked for the seedbed of the Jesus tradition solely in the Christian community after Jesus' death, which entailed putting the main emphasis on the discontinuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ proclaimed by the church. In recent years, however, exegesis has increasingly taken into account the social intercourse and fellowship of (the) disciples with

Jesus during his earthly life. In the total picture of the biblical Jesus Christ, therefore, the continuity between the historical Jesus and the 'proclaimed Christ' is coming into focus more than before, even though opinion regarding its concrete form is still sharply divided. This new orientation makes it clear that the New Testament was indeed written in the context of the church's professed belief that Jesus is the crucified-and-risen one, but that people were also very much aware of the historical disharmony between the Christian experience of the exalted Christ present in the believing community and the recollection of the life Jesus had lived on earth. The biblical text contains all kinds of pointers to such an awareness.[10] Based on these it is possible up to a point − quite adequately, at any rate − to separate recollections of Jesus' life on earth from the 'amended version' which stems from the situation of the earliest church. And even where this turns out to be substantially impossible, it remains true that for the very sake of the Christian kerygma a 'historical' concern with Jesus is partly the source of the tradition, the deposit of which is to be found in and even prior to the synoptic gospels. Hence the likely assumption is that the Jesus whom the gospels present resembles − not in every detail, of course, but substantially − the historically 'real thing', in spite
[072] of all the church's updating. Thus modern exegesis has abandoned Bultmann's principle that Jesus' proclamation forms part of the premises of the theology of the New Testament and forms no part of that theology as such.[11] Currently the rather abrupt discontinuity between the proclaiming Jesus and the proclaimed Christ postulated by kerygma theologians is being drastically modified. The four gospels are undeniably very much conditioned by the confessional affirmation, proclamation, catechesis, paraenesis and liturgy of the first Christian congregations, hence are overlaid with the evangelists' own theology; but nonetheless they are thought to contain sufficient basic information about Jesus and recollections of him, with respect to his message, his attitude to life and his conduct as a whole.

Thus it could be said that the factors inspiring the tradition about Jesus lie in his personal fellowship with his disciples during his lifetime, with those, that is, who came under the spell of his person, message and ministry. So the

[10] Of the recent literature, see especially: J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma;* Th. Boman, *Die Jesus über lieferung im Lichte der neueren Volkskunde* (Göttingen 1967); J. Robinson-H. Koester, *Trajectories,* D. Lührmann, 'Erwägungen zur Geschichte des Urchristentums', in EvTh 32 (1972), 452-467; U. Wilckens, 'Jesusüberlieferung und Christus-kerygma', in *Theologia Viatorum* 10 (1966), 311-339; N. A. Dahl, 'Der historische Jesus als geschichtswissenschaftliches und theologisches Problem', in KuD 1 (1955), 104-132; Schulz, *Q-Quelle;* A. Vögtle, *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (Düsseldorf 1971), and 'Jesus von Nazareth', in *Oekumenische Kirchengeschichte* (ed. E. Kottje and B. Möhler) (Mainz-Munich 1970), 3-24; L.E. Keck, *A future for the historical Jesus* (Nashville-New York 1971); also:E. Güttgemanns, *Offene Fragen zur Form-geschichte des Evangeliums* (Munich 1971²). (See below in the detailed analysis.)

[11] German text:'Die Verkündigung Jesu gehört zu den Voraussetzungen der Theologie des Neuen Testaments und ist nicht ein Teil dieser selbst' *(Theologie,* 1).

memory of these things, together with their experiences after Jesus' death, forms the matrix out of which, given the initiative of God's saving activity (both before and after that death), Christian faith in the risen, that is, the personally forever living, Jesus was born. The acknowledgment and confession of the crucified-and-risen one manifestly embrace the recollected substance of his earthly life: the kerygma itself, based on its own self-understanding, is meant to refer back to the past events involving Jesus.

Current exegesis certainly does not accept the extreme interpretation of the Scandinavian school, which uses a concept of tradition that has to be described as 'scholastic' and almost technically rabbinical,[12] but it is increasingly recognizing that the remembrance of the 'words and deeds of Jesus', that is to say, of all that Jesus said, did and suffered, is of fundamental significance for New Testament Christology (Christologies), even though the accounts of them in the gospels are invariably set within the horizon of a particular christological kerygma. In other words, there is a continual interaction between remembrance and later experience: detailed reminiscences modify the total picture of Jesus that lives on in the community; and those memories are clarified in light of his entire life. All this enabled the disciples to interpret their experiences as God's saving activity. Thus there would seem to be a correlation between the disciples' self-understanding and their understanding of Jesus, both before and after his death, although it should be noted that it was only after that death, on the basis of new experiences which placed their recollections in a different light, that they penetrated the core of Jesus' ministry [073] in their own living. Only then did they come to recognize him as the real and definitive embodiment of salvation, to which they were at last able to give a name: the Christ, the son of man, the Son. When Jesus of Nazareth, in his real offer of salvation, is the norm and criterion of what believers in Jesus say about him in their own cultural and religious milieu, in other words, when he is the absolute 'Yonder presence' (*Gegenüber*) of the Christ-confessing churches, each and all of which find their inspiration and orientation in him, then a view of Jesus based on the historico-critical approach is of essential theological importance.

That Jesus is the normative criterion for the church's proclamation, albeit via the experiences of his disciples before and after his death, is still contested − sometimes fiercely − by certain theologians in both the Catholic and the Protestant tradition. The reason given for this dissent is that such an assertion means that the Easter event ceases to be 'the one point of departure'.[13] We

[12] E.g. B. Gerhardson, *Memory and manuscript* (Uppsala 1961); *Tradition and transmission in early Christianity* (Coniectanea Neotestamentica, 20) (Lund 1964).

[13] Thus, for example, N. Schmithals, 'Kein Streit um des Kaisers Bart', in *Evangelische Kommentare* 3 (1970), 78-82 and 416-418; G. Strecker,'Die historische und theologische Problematik der Jesusfrage', in EvTh 29 (1969),453-476, especially 469.

might counter that by asking: in that case, assuming one does not want to label it pure ideology, how does one arrive at this Easter kerygma in the first place? And we might go on to ask why the kerygma in the New Testament is what it is only when informed by the remembrance of events associated with the life and death of Jesus. The veto on pursuing the quest for Jesus of Nazareth (via the kerygma and the gospels) would seem to be based on a prior conviction that salvation in Jesus is exclusively bound up with his resurrection. The question is, though, whether such an exclusive, one-sided connection accords with the gospels. Why should the gospels and a tradition regarding Jesus be necessary at all if the Easter kerygma is the sole, all-encompassing ground of salvation?

On the other hand it seems to me that, while the present tendency to play down the distinction between 'Jesus of Nazareth' and the 'Christ of the church' − reacting against Bultmann and his successors' heavy emphasis on the discontinuity − is justified, it may nevertheless be in danger of going to the other extreme. It is fair enough to make every allowance for the continuity between Jesus' self-understanding and the church's understanding of him, as well as to demonstrate, on historical grounds, the continuity between the disciples' faith before and after Jesus' death; but it is quite another thing to try and validate the Christian faith on that basis. Historical study of Jesus is extremely important, it gives concrete content to faith; but it can never be a verification of the faith. A historically reconstructed picture of Jesus can do no more than *admit* or reserve a place for Christian interpretation; it cannot
[074] categorically demand it on the strength of its own position. Jesus can be interpreted just as rationally in Jewish, non-Christian or general religious terms. In any case a historian as such cannot demonstrate that in Jesus God conducted a truly salvific activity. He cannot objectively establish it as a salvific fact. Whether before or after Jesus' death, that requires a religious decision based on events centred on Jesus, which are certainly identifiable but remain historically ambiguous, hence cannot be considered rationally cogent. If through our historical study we discover that Christology after Jesus' death rests fairly and squarely on his life, message and actual conduct, then this indicates real continuity; but it is only an important finding if one proceeds from the religious premise that God is indeed at work in this Jesus. That is an act of faith.

However, one can conduct a historical inquiry without presupposing any such thing. Scholars who are also believing Christians usually overstate the case for the historical Jesus and in fact base their appraisal on faith, not on scholarship; even a punctilious historian like G. Bornkamm fails to avoid this in his already somewhat dated study of 'Jesus of Nazareth'. Thus ultimately historical research comes to look like a sort of justification or duplication of

christological interpretation. If one can show that the Christian kerygma is directly in line with Jesus' self-understanding as that appears in his entire ministry and in his attitude to the death which he came to realize was inevitable, this still proves nothing about the validity of Christian faith. Jesus' sayings and ministry have no absolute, self-warranting validity − unless one believes in him. So a believer's task in historical research is to present the life of Jesus as a *leading question*, which is then posed historically in a way that invites either rejection and repudiation as something scandalous, or a decision to risk commitment to this Jesus in faith. Naturally a question does posit something; it is, after all, directed to something. But if one identifies and acknowledges the aim, that is an act of faith or at least the beginning of one.

The moment we human beings inquire into the significance of a historical happening, it reveals itself as complex, ambiguous, susceptible of multiple interpretations, while as an occurrent phenomenon it intrinsically had a very specific form: that which it is, and nothing else, thus an unambiguous fact (definitively, only after a person's − here Jesus' − death). The Christian faith (a particular interpretation of Jesus) makes a decision when faced with this ambivalence, which remains open to historico-critical inquiry, and on religious [075] grounds actually repudiates the rightfulness of a non-Christian (e.g. Jewish, secular or atheistic) interpretation of Jesus. The believer will base this decision on trust, thus affirming the unequivocal interpretation − that of the Christian faith − as the only true one, that is, the answer which (albeit expressed in different forms) faithfully responds to the historically complex reality of Jesus. This interpretive response surpasses the purely historical evidence about Jesus, yet the latter is not excluded from a decision made in faith.

Historical criticism certainly cannot lay a foundation for faith in Jesus. At the same time its task is not purely negative, that is, to prevent the foundation from crumbling under our feet (which would be the case if it were demonstrated that Jesus never existed or was a quite different person from what the faith says). In a positivist era the fact that reality is more than what can be discovered through 'objective observation' and scientific analysis presupposes openness to faith; on the other hand (given our modern historical consciousness), historical inquiry is *essential* for faith to gain access to the authentic gospel. The result of historical investigation is objectively observed material in which the believer sees more, experiences a disclosure. The believer in fact sees God's saving activity realized in Jesus' life, which would not be possible without the material about Jesus recovered by the historical method. This, then, is the importance of historical study of Jesus for determining, concretely, the content of faith. Again, the historical approach serves to show that the existential question which Jesus poses for us only acquires its full force − as is the case with every human life − when his life has run its course to the

end, that is, after his death; only then is a definitive verdict possible. Before his death even the disciples acclaim him only as a prophet; the 'higher' honorific titles emerge in the period after his death.

This is why a modern theology or Christology cannot ignore the historico-critical data. To deny these is to fail to take seriously the historical basis of Christianity and to see its power to elicit a life commitment located in a purely formal kerygma. I would not deny that such a kerygma-without-Jesus may still open up new existential options and can still have challenging power. But Christianity would lose its historical basis and become a purely fortuitous phenomenon in the life of religious humans, liable to vanish as readily as it appeared. One cannot go on for ever believing in an idea, whether it is abstract (D. Strauss's notion of 'God become man' without Jesus) or is given existential
[076] content (such as Bultmann's kerygma). In that way Christianity loses its universal purport and forfeits the right to continue speaking of God's ultimate saving activity in history: one would let the world be regulated by an *Ideengeschichte*. Ideas so often let us down or end up functioning as ideologies. I can only believe and put my trust in persons (even though I am sometimes betrayed by them as well). That is why for me the Christian faith entails not only the personal, living presence of the glorified Jesus, but also a link with his life on earth; for it is precisely that earthly life that was acknowledged and empowered by God through the resurrection. For me, therefore, a Christianity or kerygma minus the historical Jesus of Nazareth is ultimately vacuous − not Christianity at all, in fact. If the very heart of the Christian faith consists in an affirmation in faith of God's saving activity in history − decisively accomplished in the life history of Jesus of Nazareth − for the liberation of human beings (in other words, if we must use the language of faith even when speaking about the historical Jesus), then the personal history of this Jesus cannot be lost sight of, nor can our talk about it in the language of faith degenerate into ideology.

Thus Jesus of Nazareth turns out to be, *theologically*, the antipode of the Christ-confessing churches, constantly present even though this antipode − criterion and norm − can never be grasped in itself but only apprehended *in the course of* our letting ourselves be defined by Jesus. The difficulty with reaching a scrupulous interpretation of Jesus, therefore, is the ambit in which it has to be achieved. What I mean is that we have to express the reality of Jesus in our contemporary hermeneutic categories, which are given in advance (albeit open to criticism) and accessible to all; at the same time we can only recognize what that reality signifies *for us* in and via those categories. In other words, the critical disharmony between the actual offer of salvation that Jesus is and the interpretive response of the believing community is a problem typical not only of New Testament forms of expression but of our own as well.

Chapter 2

RENEWED NEED FOR A POST-CRITICAL, NARRATIVE HISTORY

I have said that the historian's quest for Jesus is theologically relevant because [077]
in its thematic import its aim is to help clarify the abiding ***Gegenüber*** of Jesus of Nazareth as norm and criterion for the churches and all who believe that salvation is to be found in him.

Yet this scientific approach, too, runs into difficulties**.** To start with, it is totally alien to the 'historical perspective' of the Bible. History is experienced very differently in a pre-critical culture. There history is the transmission of continually updated stories that live on among mankind. Its factuality − whether this or that actually occurred in precisely such and such a way − is less important. When Jesus says, 'There was once a man and he had two sons . . .' or 'Somebody lost a sheep [or a coin] . . .' it would not occur to anyone to ask whether this 'really happened'. What matters is the truth of the story itself, that is, whether it 'grabs us', strikes home and makes us the active subjects of a new story.[1] The story-telling or narrative history that was usual in antiquity has to do with action, with a challenge, an appeal or summons to adopt a particular attitude; and in that respect 'true' stories (from a modern viewpoint) have the same function and realistic concreteness as fictional ones.

This affects even ancient historiography proper and the whole approach to literature in the ancient world.[2] Throughout the Greco-Roman world of the time people were reared in that mindset from their youth up. Everybody knew that one wrote history, not so much for information as to induce a certain

[1] See: R. Koselleck and W. Stempel (eds), *Geschichten und Geschichte* (Munich 1972); H. Weinrich, *Literatur für Leser* (Stuttgart, 1972), and 'Narrative theology', in Conc 9 (1973), n. 5, 46-56; K. Stierle, 'L'histoire comme exemple, l'exemple comme histoire', in *Poétique* 10 (1972), 176-198; A.B. Lord, *Der Sänger erzählt* (Göttingen 1965); see also 'Leven met verhalen', in *Schrift,* n. 26 (1973), 41-76.

[2] See H. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris 1948), and more recently, with emphasis on historical reliability: A.W. Mosely, 'Historical reporting in the ancient world', in NTS 12 (1965-1966), 10-26. This insight yields results in exegesis by, among others, Th.J. Weeden, *Mark-traditions;* J.A. Baird, *Audience criticism and the historical Jesus* (Philadelphia 1969), and J. L. Martyn, *History and theology in the fourth gospel* (New York 1969).

ethical or religious worldview in the reader. The Roman historian Titus Livy (59 BC-AD 17) spelled this out as a valid ideal for historiography. The crux of this view is that authors indirectly provide the interpretation they want to give to specific historical events by portraying the characters of the persons
[078] involved in the way that they wish to interpret them. So with what nowadays would be considered a great deal of 'historical latitude' they give us their view of this or that character without subsequent interpretive commentary; their view is already 'objectivized' in the characters from the outset: heroes are idealized, 'fictitious' evil deeds are attributed to cowards. For instance, when the Markan gospel portrays Jesus' disciples historically as grasping nothing of his message, as timid souls who, when it comes to the crunch, are lost in sleep, who turn tail and desert Jesus altogether, it is doing exactly what other profane historians did in those days. Its view of the apostles prior to Easter is 'objectivized' in the reactions and behaviour it postulates of these disciples in the narrative. In the case of Luke, for example, who takes a different view of the disciples' conduct, they do not behave as they do in Mark. Readers in those days were not confused by this: they knew that a particular character portrayal was meant to convey the author's interpretive slant on the individual to the reader; and the readers were intrigued by this particular slant on Jesus and the other persons in the biblical story. The way the characters behave, the concrete actions the author ascribes to them, are his indirect commentary on them. From a modern historical standpoint the actions described may be 'historically true' or (whether or not with a historical core) 'fictitious'; but that is neither here nor there. The actions reflect exactly how the author, with his readers in mind, sees those persons and how they strike him. The author's aim will always be to influence his readers for good and deter them from evil. For that reason anyone who is held up to be a hero must have conformed to the lofty principles he intended to imprint on the reader's mind. In the education of the time, where literature is concerned people were carefully trained to understand texts in this way. Even though the four evangelists had only primary or secondary education, they did exactly the same thing as any other literary person of that time would have done − and so their readers understood it. Hence the characters of Jesus, the Jews and the disciples, as well as their actions, differ depending on whether it is Mark, Matthew, Luke or John telling the story. That is to say, these differences point primarily to divergent views and interpretations of the Jesus reality they are proclaiming. It is through comparing the different versions that the 'historically authentic' core (from a modern historian's viewpoint) often emerges; but this 'historical authenticity' is also pure abstraction, lifted out of a concrete, living whole. This
[079] thought pattern, which applies to the four gospels as well, is an important hermeneutic key to their meaning. Anyone reading the gospels with a keen eye

to the way the characters are delineated will know how the writer wants to have them interpreted; thus he will know what moral and religious message is being conveyed and will not worry about differences between one evangelist and another. In fact, in a religious context the differences are important and, in retrospect, given our modern scientific approach, actually relevant to what to our mind is a more exact 'historical reconstruction'.

We no longer have this 'narrative innocence', which permeates even the historiography of the ancient world. Since the rise of the historical sciences modern man has been concerned first and foremost with 'true events'; his scientific scholarship sets out to recover the past on an allegedly value-free basis. We want 'historically guaranteed' answers to the historical truth question. Yet the hermeneutic sciences and critical theories have shown how this so-called value-free stance itself serves to conceal other, equally real value judgments. To my mind linguists who advocate a return to narrative innocence fail to appreciate that people in a post-critical era cannot possibly revert to an 'original primitivism' (Kierkegaard). So it has to be a 'second innocence', that is, a style of narration that has been through the 'value-free', neutralizing process of the sciences and the interiorizing of consciousness (reflection) and has learnt that, on the one hand, stories may be told prematurely (thus covering up a lot of injustice, lovelessness and real problems); on the other hand, when, after all its analyses and interpretations, reason is no longer able to articulate theoretically what is left to be said, it is obliged to express its elusive 'surplus reality' in stories and parables. Hence an argumentative Christology should also end up as a story about Jesus, a narrative Christology, and not as an all-encompassing, theoretical 'christological system'. In terms of the actual intention of gospel literature, apropos, for instance, the stories about Jesus' miracles, the primary question should not be whether Jesus actually performed these miracles, but what they signify, what people want to say when they relate or report such miracles of Jesus. Only when this has been clarified does the secondary question arise, namely what in Jesus' life corresponds historically to these miracle stories. The question of which miracles or signs Jesus in fact performed only becomes relevant in the third place. And then it turns out that historically a number of miracles stand up [080] while other such stories are 'secondary', having often been constructed after the resurrection on Old Testament models. Thus, in the line of ancient historiography, the theological interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth is embodied in his conduct during his days here on earth. But this presupposes that Jesus came across to those believers as a person 'who went about doing good', in other words, that historically his character was such as to lend itself to this christological interpretation. Hence the question of the historical Jesus is still basic to any properly constructed Christology, but without becoming a

positivistic obsession. The historico-critical approach continues to be necessary because of the enormity of Christianity's claim that human destiny actually depends on the very special history that occurred in Jesus of Nazareth. This cannot be substantiated simply by telling stories, whose meaning is said to lie solely in their practical application. What does substantiate it, though, is the life story of the man Jesus as a story of God.

Section Two

CRITERIA FOR A CRITICAL IDENTIFICATION OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS

§1 Background against which the historical criteria must be viewed: matrix of the various criteria

Historians and exegetes alike agree that in all pre-canonical and New Testament traditions of early Christianity the absolute identification of the earthly Jesus with the Christ proclaimed by the local churches is a basic assumption.[1] One could even call this identity the hermeneutic key to a proper understanding of the gospels. Of course, this intention of the New Testament, while directly relevant for the theologian, is less so for the historian, who sees that the memories recorded in the New Testament are in any case governed by various kerygmata and have been adapted to, 'updated' in, the church's proclamation and paraenesis, in catechesis, liturgy, et cetera. I have said that in the New Testament text we often encounter signs of the authors' awareness of the historical distance between Jesus' earthly life and the church's situation. In other words, kerygmatic intention − that is, one proclaiming salvation in Jesus − in no way needs to contradict a historical concern, even though the historical value must be critically tested. What is more, the particular kerygma is the motive, the reason for the emergence of a given tradition about Jesus. First of all, therefore, one should explore the purpose of a tradition, that is, the reason why a certain local congregation preserves a particular saying or particular [081]

[1] Thus e.g. N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the teaching of Jesus* (London 1967), 245; H. Bartsch, *Jesus, Prophet und Messias* (Frankfurt 1970), 11,17-20 and 39-40; P. Stuhlmacher, 'Kritische Marginalien zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Frage nach Jesus', in *Fides et Communicatio* (Festschrift for M. Doerne) (Göttingen 1970), 341-361; J. Blank, *Jesus von Nazareth* (Freiburg 1972), 78; W. Kümmel, *Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments nach seinen Hauptzeugen* (Göttingen 1969), 23; Roloff, *Das Kerygma* (passim); A. Vögtle, 'Das Evangelium', l.c., 16-30; H. Schlier, 'Die Anfänge des christologischen Credo', in *Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie* (Freiburg 1970), 13-58.

acts of Jesus in its memory and faithfully hands them down.[2] For each kerygma displays a specific historical concern with Jesus of Nazareth. This applies even to the Pauline proclamation of Christ, concentrated on the 'paschal' kerygma, which sees the historical fact of Jesus' death as the very core of his true humanity, in reaction against a false divinizing of the earthly Jesus. Even if Paul knew little about Jesus' earthly life in other respects, about his message and conduct, it still indicates that he wants his kerygma to be
[082] grounded in a historical Jesus event, perhaps the most profoundly human event in Jesus' whole life on earth: his actual trial and execution. This may be a one-sided view – but despite that, concern for a historical foundation for his kerygma is no less evident. The object of the various New Testament testimonies is not an ethereal 'heavenly being', sojourning on earth in human guise, but the concrete person Jesus of Nazareth. This is the one and only basis for an authentic Christology.

History reveals that there are various groups, more especially a number of culturally and sociologically diverse local Christian congregations, who act as bearers of traditions corresponding to different christological projects derived from pre-canonical and New Testament Jesus traditions.[3] In view of this, the question arises: on the basis of which kerygmatic interpretation of Jesus did certain people group together in a local church, thus making a 'Jesus tradition' possible? The local church is the vehicle of a tradition − which prompts the further question: how was it that these communities, thanks to historical interaction and mutual contact, evaluated, adopted or criticized various christological conceptions, and either handed them down, along with their own legacy, or rejected them?

Delimiting a precise, specific christological profession of faith in Jesus actually entails delimiting one early congregation's religious tradition, that is, its kerygma as well as its distinctive 'historical' concern. Regarding the gospel or catechetical tradition as secondary, as often happened among the *Formgeschichte* school of exegetes – in opposition to the allegedly primary 'kerygmatic tradition' − is no longer tenable with regard to the early church as a whole. Kerygma and a concern with Jesus of Nazareth go hand in hand from the very outset, since it is a fact of history that each of the numerous credal trends to be found in or via the four gospels is paralleled by historical interest in this or that aspect of the earthly Jesus − even if this means narrowing the focus of each individual kerygmatic or christological project: either the

[2] See Roloff, *Das Kerygma*, 70.

[3] D. Lührmann, 'Erwägungen zur Geschichte der Urchristentums', l.c., 452-467, and 'Liebet eure Feinde', in ZThK 69 (1972) (412-438), 435-436; J. M. Robinson and H. Koester, *Trajectories* (one of the theses of this book); also G. Schille, *Anfänge der Kirche* (Munich 1966); 'Prolegomena zur Jesusfrage', in ThLZ 93 (1968), 481-488; 'Was ist ein Logion?', in ZNW 61 (1970), 172-182, and *Das vorsynoptische Judenchristentum* (Stuttgart 1970).

miracles of Jesus or his central message or his trial and execution.[4] Hence when we start looking (in Part Three) for specific, divergent currents of credal material, this will help us to discover what facet of Jesus' life a given local congregation found especially compelling.

If − as is historically the case and is also socio-psychologically explicable − certain groups of people tell a 'story about Jesus', they do so because in one way or another they have found salvation in Jesus of Nazareth, that is, they all [083] have a 'kerygma' to propagate, on the basis of which they acclaim Jesus as messiah, the risen one, the divine miracle worker, the sufferer whom God has exalted or whatever. It becomes *their* story about Jesus. Memories of particular words and actions of Jesus are thus handed down because these earliest congregations had somehow found salvation in Jesus. Acknowledgment of salvation in Jesus was the matrix of all traditions about him. In that sense a specific 'Christology' lies at the source of, is the driving force behind, every concrete tradition regarding Jesus of Nazareth. So without prejudice to whatever else remains to be said − contrary to what many exponents of *Formgeschichte* consider self-evident − the assumption should be in favour of, not against, the notion that early Christian traditions display a 'historical' interest in Jesus, taking into account the selectivity peculiar to each tradition, their updating tendencies and the religio-cultural concepts they employ in articulating their historical experience of salvation in Jesus. That is why I would say that the primary burden of proof rests not with someone who is prepared to 'derive' Jesus from certain sayings and acts recorded in the New Testament, but rather with the person who argues for a 'secondary' interpolation or later process of church building.[5] This by no means implies that the record of Jesus' sayings and actions is a historically exact record of events, but that they do give us a full-length portrait of him. Thus even legends may provide a vivid, life-size representation of an individual.

Because of the varied christological perceptions of Jesus in early Christianity, which did not arise later but existed from the very beginning, the technical terms 'secondary' or 'tertiary' tradition, as used by the *Formgeschichte* school, have to be carefully defined (which some scholars in fact do). After all, what is 'secondary' in one local community (i.e. what appears later in the tradition of a particular local church or is plainly the work of an editor − e.g. recognition of the dogmatic significance of Jesus' words and deeds in the Q tradition which only surfaces in its second, Hellenistic Judaeo-Christian phase[6]) may be primary and early in another, for instance pre-Markan local community.[7] Thus

[4] The different facets have been dissected in a fascinating way by E. Trocmé, *Jesus de Nazareth vu par les témoins de sa vie* (Neuchâtel 1971), although some of his views are problematic.
[5] D. Lührmann, 'Liebet eure Feinde', l.c., 434-435.
[6] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 55-176 compared with 177-480; cf. 481-489.
[7] See G. Schille, 'Prolegomena zur Jesusfrage', in ThLZ, l.c., 485-486; H. Grasz, *Theologie und Kritik*

this most probably somewhat later dogmatic interest in the Q tradition has been affected historically by contact with the − in this respect older − material of the pre-Markan community's tradition.[8] The fact that, after the gospel of Mark, a great deal of 'new' material 'suddenly' turns up in Luke and Matthew
[084] − the sermon on the mount or on the plain − in itself tells us nothing about the 'secondary' character of this tradition, which furthermore (although unknown **to** Mark) might well be thought to exhibit traits antedating the Easter event in its three beatitudes. After all, specific memories come back to us 'as we need them'; but they are no less genuine for that! However, the specific recollection in this case will in many instances have come from other Christian congregations which had a distinctive concern of their own with the same Jesus of Nazareth.

From this we may conclude that what is 'primary', 'secondary' or even 'tertiary' for one particular Christian congregation's tradition does not necessarily have to be described as 'church building' or inauthentic Jesus material in the variegated totality of early Christian traditions. Form critics' attempts to dissect and separate tradition from redaction still do not give us a chronology, genesis or development in the totality of early Christian views of Jesus. Besides the obvious development in a particular christological project or the credal affirmation of one early congregation in accordance with its new situation and concrete needs, there is 'development' through contact of one community's christological project with that of other local churches. The four gospels we have lying before us are not only a christological interpretation of Jesus, that is, a vision deriving from the experience of salvation-in-Jesus offered by God, but also a critical adoption of and reaction to previous interpretations of Jesus by other local Christian communities. In fact, we can no longer assume, as people once did, the single kerygma of a so-called Jerusalem mother church, which only later branched out in various directions.[9] The facts contradict that. Thus the gospels presuppose an 'interaction', highly complex and difficult to reconstruct, of different Christologies − evolving even within their own tradition and belonging to diverse early Christian congregations. From the historian's viewpoint we can most probably regard the pre-Markan, pre-Pauline, pre-Johannine and Aramaic traditions, as well as the Greco-Jewish Jerusalem and, finally, the Palestinian-Transjordanian tradition of the Q community, as well established. Each of them would appear to be firmly rooted in particular facets of Jesus' life that form a basis for their kerygma. The later synoptic gospels are an attempt to synthesize the pluriform material of

(Göttingen 1969), 9-27.

[8] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 241.

[9] The cited works by E. Güttgemanns, *Offene Fragen*; D. Lührmann, 'Erwägungen', l.c., and 'Liebet eure Feinde', l.c.,and G. Schille, are reactions against precisely this.

the traditions − and they do so in a way which indeed presents new possibilities and Christian freedom for twentieth century Christians, but which also sets certain limits.

From this it follows that we can draw no distinction between a 'kerygmatic tradition' and a 'Jesus tradition',[10] between a 'handing down' of Jesus and a 'handing down' of Christ. All early Christian traditions are both 'kerygma' and recollection of Jesus of Nazareth, that is to say, they are governed by a quite specific (pluriform) profession of faith in Jesus of Nazareth − no one else, and not a myth (even though they may speak 'mythically' about Jesus) − and for that very reason they are all also 'Jesus tradition'. That is, in light of a certain religious interpretation of this Jesus they are, in their own way, a true recollection of who the Jesus of history actually was and of what he said and did, even if in many cases that church's kerygma was connected with only one (actual) facet of the life or death of Jesus, and that a 'historical' slant did not have the same critical importance then as in modern historiography. [085]

From this we draw a further conclusion. The dissonances and disparities in the gospel material, often exegetically attributed to a hiatus between the 'historical Jesus' and the 'kerygmatic Christ', may in fact simply be disparities in post-Easter Christian interpretations of Jesus.[11] First and foremost, historically we have to take into account differing early Christologies in the church and not an actual hiatus between Jesus of Nazareth and the 'church's Christ' of early Christianity, though it must be admitted that besides the religio-cultural situation of the individual congregations, the wealth of meanings, the ambivalent figure of Jesus that is 'open' to so many interpretations, and the complexity of his historical manifestation in what was nonetheless a quite distinct period in human history, obviously gave rise to these, at the time, diverse Christologies.

§2 Why then search for criteria to direct the sifting process?

In view of the foregoing discussion, does it still make sense to look for cogent criteria on which to base a decision as to what is authentic Jesus material or comes directly from Jesus (*verba ipsissima, facta ipsissima* and *intentio ipsissima*)? We could sum up what I have said with a proposition of the veteran exegete,

[10] As opposed to the current twofold division, 'life-of-Jesus tradition' and 'kerygma tradition' (maintained by Schulz, *Q-Quelle*, 31, with many others), Th. Boman, 'Die Jesus-überlieferung', l.c., 29-61, esp. 42-44, tries to resolve the problem by referring to both 'kerygmatic tradition' and the 'Jesus tradition' as 'tradition concerning Jesus', being two forms of Jesus traditions. But in fact there is no purely kerygmatic tradition without reference to Jesus of Nazareth, no more than there is reference to Jesus without kerygma. Even James Robinson's distinction (Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories*, 20-70) between kerygma and history cannot be found in the New Testament itself.

[11] G. Schille, 'Was ist ein Logion?', l.c., 172-182.

N. A. Dahl, who says that the Jesus tradition in its entirety is 'church building',
[086] but at the same time just as entirely a reflex, a reverberation of Jesus' actual ministry in the post-Easter church(-es) − 'a maximum containing everything pertinent to our historical knowledge of Jesus'.[12] After all, the effect of faith-inspired concern with another human being is not only 'creative' − to the point of myth making − but also 'conservative' (i.e. preserving in memory). In that sense the master is recognizable in his disciples. This perspective gives the text of the New Testament a pre-emptive vote of confidence.

But however allegedly sound the grounds for this view, historically there are snags attached to it. For the historian the basic New Testament affirmation of the absolute identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the crucified-and-risen one proclaimed by the church is a given fact to be noted; but the affirmation in itself is no guarantee that the continuity between Jesus and the church's proclamation of Christ is historically factual. That has to be tested in detail. So the historian cannot simply proceed on the strength of an affirmation about the overall (historical) trustworthiness of the gospels. Tracing each and every logion and every Christian truth back to the earthly Jesus is not a historical but a theological programme of the New Testament, just as the Old Testament traces the Law − the whole and each component − back to Moses, the inspirer of the entire Jewish legal system. What is more, none of the four gospels is the work of eye-witnesses. As they stand, they are documents of second and third generation Christians. To give us a fair idea of the boundaries as well as the free scope of a dogmatic Christology, I see a proper place for deploying these historical criteria in (an attempt at) a systematic Christology. More especially, because many West European Christologies take the Easter event as the point of disjunction between Jesus of Nazareth and the Christology of the church, we need historical criteria to give the systematic process a historically solid foundation rather than just the personal views of theologians. Historical inquiry is necessary to critically ascertain our own Christian faith; otherwise theology becomes blind and authoritarian.

Following H. Braun, J. Robinson and others, then, we rightly distinguish between 'factual authenticity' and authentic Jesus material (*ipsissima Jesu*).[13] What the Christian churches or their charismatic prophets proclaim to their
[087] respective congregations in the name of the exalted Christ may indeed reflect a basic posture adopted by the earthly Jesus, and thus may be 'substantially true', even though the earthly Jesus never uttered a word about the matter − in that sense they are historically inauthentic. If it were shown that Jesus never

[12] N.A. Dahl, 'Der historische Jesus als geschichtswissenschaftliches und theologisches Problem', in KuD 1 (1955), 104-132.
[13] H. Braun, *Jesus. Der Mann aus Nazareth und seine Zeit* (Berlin 1969[8]), 33-34; J. Robinson, *The New Quest of the historical Jesus* (Naperville 1959), 99.

said anything to the effect of 'love your enemies', this logion of the New Testament and the church could still be a faithful, realistic reflection of Jesus' own preaching. But for anyone pursuing the historical quest for Jesus it would indeed be 'inauthentic'. People have often been confused by *Formgeschichte* terminology; for practitioners of that method (many of them at any rate) have no intention whatever of denying that what is historically 'inauthentic' may nevertheless capture Jesus' deepest, authentic intention − only this cannot be demonstrated on purely historical grounds. And this critical stance does them credit. Even if this approach is adopted in the interest of Christian faith, it cannot proceed on the premise *'In dubio pro tradito'* − that would be to betray the basic critical principle. When, for instance, we find non-apocalyptic conceptions of the eschaton in the synoptic material alongside equally explicit apocalyptic ones (a fact difficult to deny), inevitably the question arises: what, historically, was Jesus' own point of view about this? Quite often a somewhat arbitrary decision is made in favour of one or other of these two options and everything that does not accord with it is said to be 'secondary'. One forgets, moreover, that these may be discrepancies between different early Christian traditions and do not in themselves indicate a divergence of perspective between Jesus of Nazareth and the 'earliest church'. Only when the question of possible discrepancies in and between the various early Christian churches has been settled can we proceed to ask about Jesus' own view of the matter. And then it becomes really necessary.

The sum of what systematic historical inquiry may establish about a person is certainly not the same thing as understanding that person in his irreducible individuality. There will always be a residue, a surplus of meaning over against all the critical results. A person can only be approached with personal trust, or can only be distrusted with a similarly decisive attitude. Both the opposition of those who were scandalized by Jesus and the confident trust of those who found their salvation in him attest a better understanding of Jesus of Nazareth than any purged, neutral account of him which scientific historical methods can give. In the end another human being can only be recognized and acknowledged in a 'disclosure' experience, an experience which for one person [088] closes and for another discloses, whether on real, tried and tested grounds or not.

Mention of such 'real grounds' indicates not only the importance of the quest for the historical Jesus but also the legitimate demand for criteria to differentiate between historically 'authentic Jesus material' and post-Easter, kerygmatic material superimposed on it.

Regrettably, this search for criteria has been confined for the most part to proponents of *Formgeschichte,* in my view a valid method in itself, but one which does not sufficiently realize its relative and perhaps 'subordinate'

significance compared to other methods. Yet there has been a noticeable shift in this respect in recent years, if only because this method (which undeniably has impressive results to its credit) has evidently run into a blind alley. Structural biblical analysis presents a (possibly unintentional) rescue operation. But just as *Formgeschichte* cannot (or will not) lead us to 'Jesus of Nazareth', neither will structuralism. It is by nature purely literary; it never goes beyond that and in fact excludes every extra-literary reference from consideration, especially any reference to the historically authentic Jesus of Nazareth.

As a theologian concerned with the way the gospel narratives refer to reality I have examined the criteria actually used by exegetes to establish what is authentic Jesus material; and I have pondered, from both a theological and a historical angle, their debates on the criteria they employ when sorting out post-Easter ecclesiastic interpretation from 'authentic' (i.e. pre-Easter) memories in various local congregations of sayings, deeds and intentions of the earthly Jesus. In the process I was careful to heed the voices of both German, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and French-oriented exegesis. Anyone venturing into the literature will be particularly struck by these differences − and will feel the socially, culturally and 'nationally' distinctive character of 'biblical exegesis' to be not so much a disturbing as a relativizing factor.

§3 Cataloguing of valid, positive criteria

Literature. P**.** Biehl, 'Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus', ThR (1957-1958),
[089] 54-76; M. Black, *An Aramaic approach to the gospels and Acts,* Oxford 1967[3]; G. Bornkamm, *Jesus von Nazareth,* Stuttgart 1963[2]; H. Braun, *Jesus,* Stuttgart-Berlin I909[2]; R. Bultmann, *Tradition;* F. C. Burkitt, *The gospel history and its transmission,* London 1906; D. G. Calvert, 'An examination of the criteria for distinguishing the authentic words of Jesus', NTS 18 (1971-1972), 209-219; C. E. Carlston, 'A positive criterion of authenticity', BRes 7 (1962), 33-39; H. Conzelmann, s.v. 'Jesus', RGG[3], III, 619-653; O. Cullmann, *Heil als Geschichte,* Tübingen 1965; N. A. Dahl, 'Der historische Jesus als geschichtswissenschaftliches und theologisches Problem', KuD 1 (1955), 104-132; C. H. Dodd, *History and the gospels* (London 1938), 91-101; *The apostolic preaching and its developments,* London 1944; *Parables of the kingdom,* London 1946; E. Fuchs, *Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus, Gesammelte Aufsätze,* 2 vols, Tübingen 1960; R. Fuller, *Critical introduction to the New Testament* (London 1966), 94-103; *The foundations of the New Testament Christology,* New York 1965 (London, Glasgow 1972[2]); F. C Grant, 'The authenticity of Jesus' sayings', *Neutestamentliche Studien* (for R. Bultmann), BZNW, 21 (Berlin 1957), 137-143; W. Grundmann, *Die Geschichte Jesu Christi,* Berlin 1956; F. Hahn, 'Hoheitstitel', and 'Methodenprobleme einer

Christologie des Neuen Testaments', Beih. EvTh, 15 (Tübingen 1970), 3-41; B. van Iersel, 'Theology and detailed exegesis', Conc. 7 (1971), n. 10, 80-89; J. Jeremias, *Die Ahendmahlsworte Jesu,* Göttingen 1967[4]; *Die Verkündigung Jesu,* Gütersloh 1971; E. Kasemann, *Besinnungen* (passim); L. E. Keck, *A future for the historical Jesus,* Nashville-New York 1971; W. Kümmel, 'Jesusforschung seit 1950', ThR 31 (1965-1966), 15-46; M. Lehmann, *Synoptische Quellenanalyse und die Frage nach dem historischen Jesu* (Berlin 1970), 163-205; D. Lührmann, 'Liebet eure Feinde', ZThK 69 (1972), 412-438; H. K. McArthur, 'Basic issues. A survey of recent gospel research', *Interpretation* 18 (1964), 39-55; T. W. Manson, *The sayings of Jesus as recorded in the gospels of St Matthew and St Luke,* London 1949 (1964[2]); N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the teaching of Jesus,* London 1967; R. Pesch, *Jesu ureigene Taten?,* Freiburg 1970; W. Richter, *Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft. Entwurf einer alttestamentlichen Liter-aturtheorie und Methodologie,* Göttingen 1971; J. Robinson, *The New Quest of the historical Jesus,* Naperville-London 1959; G. Schille, 'Was ist ein Logion?', ZNT 61 (1970), 172-182; 'Der Mangel eines kritischen Geschichtsbildes in der neutestamentlichen Formgeschichte', ThLZ 88 (1963), 491-502; H. Schürmann, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den synoptischen Evangelien,* (Düsseldorf 1968), 83-110, 111-158; 'Zur aktuellen Situation der Leben Jesu-Forschung', GuL 46 (1973), 300-310; G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit,* Göttingen 1966[2]; P. Stuhlmacher, 'Kritische Marginalien zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Frage nach Jesus', *Fides et Communicatio,* Festschrift for M. Doerne (Göttingen 1970), 341-361; W. Trilling, *Fragen zur Geschichtlichkeit Jesu,* Düsseldorf 1966; *Versuche mehrdimensionaler Schrijtauslegung* (eds H. Harsch & G. Voss), Stuttgart-Munich 1972. [090]

My search for historical criteria to test the correlation between certain credal accretions and a specific concern with specific historical facets of Jesus of Nazareth is confined to the parameters set in §1 and §2. If these historical criteria help to demonstrate the proposition of faith that the New Testament as a whole is a reflex of the earthly Jesus *in* the faith-prompted response of Christians, it follows that besides the exegetical methods known as *Formgeschichte, Redaktiongeschichte* and *Traditionsgeschichte* (these being indispensable aids) the most appropriate method is 'close reading', structural analysis or, in other words, an immanent, synchronous approach in line with modern, systematic and critical literary study. In that case an immanent analysis of one reflex (e.g. the Markan gospel in toto*)* will give us historical insight into Jesus of Nazareth and, along with that, theology. But to make that possible, and to strengthen confidence that an immanent analysis of the New Testament is the best (though not the sole) approach to Jesus of Nazareth, we must first apply historical criteria to substantiate the proposition that by and large, in terms of the acknowledgment of salvation imparted by God in Jesus

Christ, the gospels should be seen as an accurate reflex of Jesus of Nazareth.

With that in mind our survey disregards all 'negative criteria'[14] which might justify a positive denial of 'authenticity'. Those negative criteria – allegedly pointing to lack of authenticity − are altogether uncertain. They also operate with all kinds of presuppositions that a priori isolate Jesus from the Old Testament and Judaic tradition as well as from any continuity with the later thinking prompted by the faith of the church, whereas what we want is to trace both the continuity and the discontinuity. H. Braun (apparently contradicting E. Käsemann) rightly says that deciding 'what is inauthentic' (secondary texts) requires a higher degree of certainty than when we are establishing
[091] authenticity.[15] I confine myself, therefore, to 'positive criteria', which, at least in a combined application of the various criteria, permits us to attribute, legitimately (and with varying certainty), a given logion or New Testament story to the earthly Jesus.

A. REDACTION HISTORY AS A CRITERION: TRADITIONS INCORPORATED 'WILLY-NILLY'

Of the many criteria employed by exegetes I find redaction history the most valuable because it resorts least to academic hypotheses of various kinds (although it also relies on hypotheses, in that no satisfactory solution has so far been found to the 'synoptic problem').

Each of the gospels has its own theological viewpoint, revealed by structural analysis no less than by disentangling redaction and tradition. Their respective eschatological, christological or ecclesiological views reveal their theological standpoint in the selection of stories reporting the sayings and acts of Jesus, as well as the way they order and present the material. Consequently, whenever the gospels hand down material not specifically in accord with their own theological view, we may take this to signify deference to some revered tradition. In such cases we can reasonably suppose that we are dealing with traditional material which was regarded as unassailable − which either for historical or theological reasons (the importance of the church's fidelity to tradition) supposedly goes back to Jesus.[16] For instance, when a gospel reacts against a *theios anèr* Christology − Jesus, the divine miracle man[17] − yet still

[14] As, for instance, logia that are not authentic sayings of Jesus but reflect the teaching of Judaism at that time or the old Testament which presume a situation that would have been unthinkable in Jesus' day, which contradict other logia, or which, from a comparison of the various gospels, appear to be a further development.

[15] H. Braun, 'Jesus', l.c., 35-37.

[16] D.G. Calvert, 'An examination', 219; Helmut Koester's thinking tends in a similar direction in J. Robinson-H. Koester, *Trajectories,* 209.

[17] See Part Three.

reports 'miracles' performed by Jesus (e.g. the Q tradition has only two of these), then there is good reason to regard those miracles as 'authentic'; and in conjunction with other criteria this can yield historically substantiated certainty. So in order to pick up the trail of authentic historical continuity between Jesus and the church we have to be alert to aspects which raise difficulties for the Christology of a particular credal approach among early Christian local churches and evangelists, and which challenge both the Christian praxis of the specific congregation and the pressure of cultural assimilation.[18] The fact that traditional material that does not accord with their Christology should have so strong a claim − even if it does not altogether suit the evangelist's purposes, so that, in transmitting it, he 'edits' it somewhat while not hesitating to drop other traditional material (cf. e.g. Matthew or Luke [092]
with Mark) − is a criterion of an authentic Jesus tradition. Mark views Jesus' disciples prior to Easter as bewildered, cowardly and misguided. So when that gospel reveals a vein of sympathy for them there is every chance that it stems directly from actual history; a remark tending to be critical of them, especially in Luke (whose attitude to the disciples is more sympathetic), points in a similar direction.

Of course this principle (like all the others) calls for circumspection. Mark has all the disciples absent from the crucifixion (Mk. 14:50); in Luke they are manifestly present (Lk. 23:49). But to Luke this is necessary, in view of his notion of 'apostolate': to have been a witness from the time of Jesus' public ministry up to and including his resurrection (Acts 1:21-22), and so witness to his death as well. Applied in isolation this criterion often leaves the historical question unresolved. Like all the criteria it has to be used in combination with others.

B. CRITERION OF FORM CRITICISM: THE PRINCIPLE OF DUAL IRREDUCIBILITY

This method, used almost universally by exponents of *Formgeschichte*[19] to strip what is strictly peculiar to Jesus of any trace of contemporary Judaism and the later local churches, is primarily a legacy of Bultmann. His formulation entailed a number of pre-emptive decisions ('the specifically eschatological bent of Jesus' preaching' itself prejudges what we should look for as

[18] Koester, in Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories,* 209

[19] 'Criterion of distinctiveness', 'criterion of dissimilarity', 'Ausgrenzungskriterium', 'Kriterium der doppelten Abgrenzung', 'critére du distinctif spécifique'. Thus esp. R. Fuller, *Critical introduction,* 96-97 and 'The clue to Jesus' self-understanding' (Studia Evang., III-2) (Berlin 1964), 58-66; E. Käsemann, *Besinnungen,* I, 205; H. Conzelmann, in RGG III³, 623; N. Perrin, *Rediscovering,* 39; M. Lehmann, *Quellenanalyse,* 163-205, for this criterion in particular:178-186; O. Cullmann, *Heil als Geschichte,* 169; W. Kümmel, in ThR, 15-46.

historically distinctive and characteristic of Jesus).[20] This criterion was gradually refined and given the stamp of approval by Hans Conzelmann: 'We may accept as authentic anything which doesn't fit either into Jewish thinking or into the viewpoints of the later church community',[21] or as O. Cullmann put it: 'if the logion doesn't fit into the Judaism of the time nor into the post-Easter kerygma'.[22] This principle was radicalized by E. Käsemann: 'Only in a few instances are we standing on more or less firm ground: that is, where the tradition, for whatever reason, can be neither inferred from Judaism nor attributed to early Christianity.'[23]

Applying this principle in no way means denying that Jesus took over a lot
[093] of Old Testament and Judaic material and that his proclamation is in continuity with post-Easter Christian thinking; it only means that in such cases of continuity this criterion affords no historical or critical certainty as to whether the source is Jesus himself or the Judaeo-Christian church. In other words, it must not be employed as a negative criterion. Used positively, it has definite if limited value. A saying like 'The law and the prophets were until John [the Baptist]' (Lk. 16:16) was obviously quite distinct from contemporary Jewish thought. For Jews it would be inconceivable;[24] but it could also be an expression formulated not by Jesus but an interpretation of a retrospective, post-Easter Christian reflection on the relationship between the Baptist and Jesus, so that here the criterion fails to establish the historical authenticity of this logion. Again, this principle assumes that we know precisely what 'Jewish' and 'Christian' might have been like. In this appraisal all sorts of subjective elements are at work, in some cases including ignorance about the precise situation.

This criterion regarding elements of Jesus' message and conduct that have no parallel in either the Judaism of his time or the early church is strengthened in one respect, namely, where early Christianity is actually rather embarrassed by certain traditions, but nevertheless, and despite a variety of interpretations, does not suppress the facts but rather hands them down:[25] for instance, Jesus' submitting to John's baptism, his trial and execution, utterances like 'Why do you call me good?' (Mk. 10:18), the fact that the Baptist is presented as the

[20] R. Bultmann: 'Where opposition to the morality and piety of Judaism and the specifically eschatological tone, which constitute what is characteristic of Jesus' preaching, are expressed, and where on the other hand there are no specifically Christian features, it is easiest to conclude that here is an authentic parable of Jesus' (*Tradition,* 222). For the 'eschatological frame', see: Bultmann, *Theologie,* 110-113.

[21] RGG III³, 623.

[22] O. Cullmann, *Heil als Geschichte,* 169.

[23] E. Käsemann, *Besinnungen,* I, 206ff.

[24] See W. Trilling, *Fragen zur Geschichtlichkeit Jesu,* 46-50.

[25] Käsemann, *Besinnungen,* I, 205. P.W. Schmiedel in particular called this the 'pillar argument' – 'foundation pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus' (!) – in *Biblical Encyclopaedia* 1901, vol. 2 (1761-1898), 1847, cited by M. Lehmann, *Quellenanalyse,* 174-175.

inaugurator of a new era (Mt. 11:12-13), et cetera − elements which, it is said, the church could not possibly have invented. Yet even this argument is subject to all kinds of personal judgments. According to this criterion, for example, 'not even the Son knows of that day' (Mk. 13:32) must be authentic, since the church allegedly would not have invented Jesus' ignorance on this point. But such high-Christology reasoning based on Jesus' omniscience is alien to many biblical traditions. Is it not just as likely that when the parousia failed to materialize this logion suggested itself to the church as a way of making Christians realize that Jesus was not mistaken about the nearness of the end? The same applies to the temptations of Jesus, his struggle in Gethsemane, his alleged forsakenness on the cross: this is where the 'pillar' argument falls apart.

Even where it does have a certain validity the 'irreducibility' criterion is still limited in its force. Therefore, following the American exegete N. Perrin we may define it more precisely, as follows: a logion, words or deeds of Jesus as reported by early Christian communities are more likely to be authentically his [094]
when their authenticity and distinctness from both the Judaism of that day and the early church are discernible in the earliest accessible stratum.[26] Even this is not wholly convincing. Drawing on their Christianity, even the earliest local churches could possess irreducible elements of their own, which are distinct from Judaism as well as from subsequent phases of the early Christian congregations.[27]

In addition the criterion often seems to have been applied on the basis of an assumed antithesis between Jesus and contemporary Judaism, whereas other criteria appear to indicate that the general anti-Jewish polemic found in the New Testament is not authentic Jesus material at all but reflects a later position adopted by local Christian congregations which, qua church, had broken away from a synagogue[28] bent on persecuting them.

Whatever its limited value may be, this criterion entails that we can only trace those aspects in which Jesus is unique, irreducible to Judaism and Christianity; naturally it cannot help us to discern his Old Testament and Judaic roots or his continuity with the church. The result yielded by this criterion is a unique Jesus in a vacuum, without any intrinsic bond with

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[26] N. Perrin, *Rediscovering,* l.c., 38-39.

[27] M. Lehmann, *Quellenanalyse,* 185; O. Cullmann, *Heil als Geschichte,* 154; W. Marxsen, *Anfangsprobleme der Christologie* (Gütersloh 1964[2]), 15.

[28] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 2 and 11-31 (thesis of the whole book); Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 485-486. Moreover, a certain anti-Pharisaic attitude would appear to be given in view of Jesus' Galilean origin. See W. Bauer, 'Jesus, der Galiläer', in *Aufsätze und kleine Schriften* (ed. G. Strecker, Tübingen 1967) (91-108), 100. See also L.E. Elliott-Binns, *Galilean Christianity* (London 1956). The lake of Gennesaret was a centre of intense communication between Jewish and Greek-speaking people (M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus,* 191-198). The attitude to the Law was not the same there as in Jerusalem, where Galilee was looked upon as a 'semi-pagan' country.

Judaism and Christianity. It allows no glimpse of how Jesus may epitomize the profoundest intentions of the Old Testament, how his faith in the creator God is at the core of his life, how, for all his ascendancy over his contemporaries, he was still a man of his time and his people, and finally how the first congregations understood his deepest intentions; originally the criterion was also formulated in the context of Western European thinking regarding the radical discontinuity between Jesus and the Christ of the church.

Yet it would be naïve to suppose that the exegetes who apply this criterion do not realize that it is bound to yield a Jesus who is 'unique' because he is isolated. But their purpose is to look for insight into a 'critically guaranteed minimum'[29] of Jesus' transcendence of his time. And in this respect any minimum is indeed a gain in understanding. What is more, every new, critically endorsed finding strengthened the assumption that the gospels are historically trustworthy, however much various situations in the church may have led them to touch up authentic sayings and acts of Jesus and perhaps to create new ones. And then the injunction applies: 'Let the maximum of
[095] tradition and the critically assured minimum approximate each other as closely as possible, and thus gradually approach the historical Jesus.'[30] So it is true that as the scientifically ascertained minimum increases, this in turn becomes a criterion for evaluating other elements of tradition.

C. TRADITION HISTORY AS A CRITERION: PRINCIPLE OF THE 'CROSS-SECTION'[31]

Accounts of the sayings and deeds of Jesus appear in the gospels in divergent, independent literary traditions. What is more, the same logia (whether or not in different traditions) occur in differing 'forms': here in parables, there in catechesis, in liturgical passages, even in a miracle story. Jesus' dealings with publicans and sinners, with the outcasts of his day, are reported in no fewer than four independent literary traditions.[32] Burkitt found as many as thirty-one logia that were circulating in both the Markan and the Q communities;[33] whence he concludes that these traditions must go back to at least ten or fifteen years after Jesus' death. However, S. Schulz has since shown that there are links between the later Judaeo-Hellenistic phase of the Q community and the

[29] Dahl, 'Der historische Jesus', l.c., 119.
[30] Dahl, l.c., 120; see also M. Lehmann, *Quellenanalyse,* l.c., 185.
[31] Known also as the 'criterion of multiple attestation'. See especially F.C. Burkitt, *The gospel history,* 147-168; also C.H. Dodd, *History and the gospel,* 91-101, which he applies to the parables in particular: *Parables of the kingdom,* 24; H.K. McArthur, *Basic issues,* 39-55; N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the teaching of Jesus,* l.c., 45.
[32] Markan tradition: Mk. 2:17 par.; Q tradition:Lk. 15:4-10 par.; Luke's own tradition or source (SL): Lk. 7:36-47; 15:11-32; 19:1-10; Matthew's own source (SM) or, perhaps, the evolved Q tradition: Mt. 10:6.
[33] Burkitt, *The gospel history,* 147-148.

Markan material, so there is no question here of a strict 'cross-section'.[34]

In so far as the principle is based solely on different traditions it is shaky, for the simple reason that relations between the synoptic gospels have not been resolved and are still hypothetical. The criterion carries more weight where the same sort of content is to be found in diverse forms (whatever their relationship in terms of tradition); such concordance gives obvious weight to the genuineness of a logion.[35] But it is equally fatal to use this criterion negatively; something found in only one tradition can still be an authentic record of Jesus, even if it is found, say, only in John (e.g. the historical possibility that, as a member of John's entourage, Jesus also baptized, John 3:22). Anyway, the 'cross-section' criterion points to the antiquity of a given tradition; and finding the same material in more than one tradition at least indicates a fundamental consistency in early Christian tradition. However, used on its own the criterion remains problematic in view of our still considerable ignorance about the relationship between one early Christian literary tradition and another.

D. CONSISTENCY OF CONTENT AS A CRITERION[36] [096]

The overall picture of what emerges as a strictly historical image of Jesus on the one hand, and an image based on detailed exegesis on the other are involved in a process of mutual verification.[37] It is the archetype of the already ancient linguistic circle of a constant shuttling between the parts and the whole − a sensitive and extremely delicate process, but one that forms part of the fundamental condition of our human potentialities in all areas: the parts illuminate the whole, which in its turn renders the parts transparent.

Contrary to Dahl's view, this principle does not imply a relationship between the scientifically guaranteed minimum and the 'bulk of the New Testament tradition'.[38] In the *historical* quest for Jesus of Nazareth the early local churches' picture of Jesus is precisely what cannot be taken as a criterion, since those kerygmatic interpretations of Jesus were the driving force behind creative tradition.[39] More to the point is the total picture which gradually emerges as a historical product of the detailed analysis. This in turn leads to further analysis; and then the fact that a detail fits or does not fit into the total

[34] S. Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 241, 371.
[35] D. Calvert, 'An examination', 217.
[36] R. Fuller, *Critical introduction,* 95, 98; C. E. Carlston, in BRes, 33-34. (Actually Carlston confines his argument to the parables; they are said to be authentic only if they are associated with Jesus' eschatological insistence on *metanoia.)* See B. van Iersel, in Conc. 7 (1971), n. 10, 80-89.
[37] B. van Iersel, l.c.
[38] N. A. Dahl, *Der historische Jesus,* 120**;** see Lehmann, *Quellenanalyse,* 185**.**
[39] M. Lehmann, *Quellenanalyse,* 196-197.

framework of the historically reconstructed picture of Jesus and his basic intentions definitely has a function. Critically reconstructed details, which bit by bit help to build up a complete picture of the earthly Jesus, are a safer starting point for further investigation than a priori acceptance of global historical reliability, even though − as with M. Dibelius[40] − it concerns the earliest layer of tradition. Partly with the help of the consistency principle, S. Schulz manages to distinguish a very early Aramaic Christian phase in the theology of the Q community from a more recent, Hellenistic Judaeo-Christian phase and thus (despite what strikes me as numerous debatable points) has broadly succeeded in exposing a very early Palestinian Christology.[41]

Moreover, in the long term − as a total historical picture of Jesus begins to emerge − the consistency principle can give rise to various sub-criteria, including consistency or correlation between Jesus' message and his actual conduct;[42] each is a criterion of the other. If it were shown, for instance, that the logion 'He who finds his life will lose it and he who loses his life ... will find it' (Mt. 10:39=Lk. 17:33, Q) is 'authentic, historical Jesus material' (difficult in itself
[097] using these criteria, because this is a widespread sapiential Judaic proverb), everything that could be said to contradict this principle in Jesus' life becomes inauthentic; what is more, we would have a criterion, for example, for establishing how Jesus appraised his death once he came to realize its inevitability. Yet this is already the beginning of theological interpretation, which will find it difficult to accept psychological inconsistencies between Jesus' teaching and practice, whereas for the historian this possibility always remains open. That is why Jesus' 'authority' is not a historical but a theological criterion indicating the theological implications of Jesus' enormous impact on his environment.

E. CRITERION OF THE REJECTION OF JESUS' MESSAGE AND PRAXIS

We might call this the 'execution' criterion, for it is based on the view that Jesus' trial and execution have a hermeneutic bearing on his actual teachings and deeds.[43] His message and conduct must have been such that they were bound to cause deep offence to (at least) the (conventional) Jewish belief and praxis of the time. This is certainly a historical criterion, but as such it only

[40] 'Discussion as to whether an individual logion is "authentic" is often pointless, because the reasons for and against are indecisive. Generally speaking, the historian is well advised to look at the tradition as a whole and not depend too much on a particular logion should it deviate from the rest of the traditions': M. Dibelius, *Jesus* (Berlin 1966[4]), 21.
[41] S. Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 55-176.
[42] E. Jüngel, *Paulus und Jesus* (Tübingen 1964[2]), 4.
[43] Especially K. Niederwimmer, *Jesus* (Göttingen 1968), 26, 31: 'The fact is, of course, that Jesus' execution must serve as key to an understanding of the whole' (31). Also N.A. Dahl, *Der historische Jesus,* 121.

highlights a need to establish which elements of his teaching and conduct gave occasion for such offence, and in addition to determine what concern the Jewish and Roman authorities might have had with his death. A historical understanding of Jesus' life, message and death is possible only when it is shown why these led to his execution. In itself it does not imply that everything Jesus said or did from the very start either can or should be seen in this perspective, as the gospels do for theological purposes, because they, too, were looking for the reason for this execution and then to depict Jesus' whole life as a 'way to the cross'.

In and of itself, therefore, this criterion does not further the quest; it only leads to careful research.

Conclusion. Positive application of these criteria to the church's memories of Jesus' earthly life enables us to distinguish between (a) sayings and actions in his life that appear in the gospels more or less as they occurred, (b) elements of his life already so influenced by actualizing tendencies in the church that one can only speak in general terms of a central core that goes back to Jesus, hence that historically authentic reminiscences seemingly do play a role in them, and [098] (c) sayings and deeds not spoken or performed by the earthly Jesus, in which the community, by attributing them to him, nevertheless expresses what the Lord who is alive in their midst concretely signifies for them in their recollection of his life on earth − in other words, they show that the earthly Jesus is indeed their norm and criterion. Thus a logion, though not actually spoken by Jesus, may be an utterance of the early church grounded in Jesus' inspiration and orientation. G. Schille rightly says: 'It is not form but substance which links a logion with its source.'[44] The relative though far from negligible value of the aforementioned criteria lies first and foremost in this: the modest element of historically authenticated material which they yield confirms the *theological* insight that, in a kerygmatic project, the gospels really are inspired by fidelity to the historical Jesus of Nazareth − which is not to say that they literally record his preaching and ministry; for them this has become a way of life, in such a way that their own life story infiltrates the story they tell of Jesus; the question (already with an ecclesial purport): 'But who do you say that I am?' (Mk. 8:29; Mt. 16:15; Lk. 9:20) is one that the early Christian communities tried to answer in good conscience.

§4. Frequently employed but invalid criteria

We have already rejected a negative use of the aforementioned criteria. Our concern here is with other positive criteria applied by some exegetes.

[44] G. Schule, 'Was ist ein Logion?', 172-182.

(a) The criterion of context, whether linguistic or cultural and geographical.

This (invalid) criterion has been used in exegesis, especially by T. W. Manson,[45] J. Jeremias[46] and, more scrupulously, by M. Black.[47] Thus J. Jeremias detected in the Greek text of the institution of the eucharist, as recorded in Mark, no fewer than twenty Aramaisms, from which he concludes that this text is very 'close to Jesus'; yet he himself is sceptical about the criterion of irreducibility, often used in a negative sense: 'It is not the aptness of critique that has to be demonstrated but its limits.'[48] Of course, Jeremias was able to show that *Abba* (Father) is an authentic word of Jesus. His proof presupposes the linguistic principle, though not as the decisive factor. But in every case the principle in itself fails totally. Historically, it is quite certain (despite assertions,
[099] including some very recent ones, that Jesus was bilingual) that Jesus presented his message in Aramaic. But various Aramaisms (Hebraisms) in the New Testament Greek in no way prove authenticity (closeness to Jesus), or even, per se, the early origin of a Jesus tradition. In itself, it does not even take us back to an early Aramaic-speaking congregation, but rather to bilingual Judaeo-Hellenistic Christians who (like the Septuagint version of the Old Testament) used a lot of Aramaic constructions in their Greek. In itself, therefore, Jeremias's principle only takes us as far as some Aramaic-speaking or Judaeo-Hellenistic Christian communities, and not (on the strength of this criterion) to Jesus himself. And these people − Greek-speaking Jewish Christians − were the most active innovators in the very early church: from them we get the terms *christianoi, ekklesia* and *euaggelion;* and it was they who acclimatized the apocalyptic expressions 'but I say unto you' and 'truly, truly I say to you' in the New Testament (see below).

Neither can Palestinian 'local colour' be a decisive factor, for the same reason. In the first place, an 'authentic' parable (one told by Jesus) might later be adapted to other local conditions and thus disclose a non-Palestinian setting, though still substantially going back to Jesus. Conversely, a Palestinian setting can just as likely be evidence of either Aramaic or Greek-speaking Palestinian Christians.

This criterion does place us in a Judaeo-Christian setting, and in that way helps us distinguish between what derives from Judaeo-Christian congregations (whether bilingual or not) and what originated in churches composed of gentile Christians. It does show that, in essence, the contribution made by the gentile Christian churches was less than has often been supposed

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[45] *Sayings of Jesus,* 18ff.

[46] The tenor of all J. Jeremias' works; see especially *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (Göttingen 1949, 1967[4]); *Sub pascha,* in ThWNT V, 895-903, and P*aschô,* V, 903-923; *Abba, Studien zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen 1966).

[47] *An Aramaic approach* (gist of the book as a whole).

[48] Käsemann, in *Besinnungen,* I, 203.

in the past, and more especially that the contribution of Greek-speaking Jewish Christians was exceptionally large.

(b) The distinctive character of the parables has not been adopted as a criterion either, although a scholar like H. Conzelmann sees them as the most valuable criterion and even as the starting point of a historical reconstruction, because they reveal Jesus' essential message.[49] The fact that in the Q community the parables only turn up in the second, Judaeo-Hellenistic phase means nothing, of course; but for many and varied reasons we first have to demonstrate the authenticity of each parable on the basis of other criteria; then and only then these authenticated parables can serve as a further criterion. The same applies to Jesus' love, his core message, et cetera; that is why I cannot include them among the fundamental first criteria. [100]

(c) Formulae like 'but I say to you' and 'truly, truly I say to you' in themselves are no guarantee whatever of authenticity, mainly because they themselves appear to be secondary. They feature everywhere in Judaeo-Hellenistic apocalyptic writings and their frequency in the New Testament gradually increased under the influence of Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, to whose circle they are almost invariably restricted.[50] Actually, the special apocalyptic import of 'amen, amen' is that what ensues is not spoken on the speaker's authority, is not a prophetic utterance nor a piece of proverbial or experiential wisdom, but rather a statement possessing (and requiring) the guarantee of apocalyptic vision and 'divine revelation'; they are the utterances of apocalyptic seers (with the same import as *pistos ho logos,* this saying is true [trustworthy], in Rev. 21:5; 22:6; 3:14; John 4:37, and repeatedly in the pastoral letters). Whether this 'seer' is Jesus in person has to be demonstrated, case by case.

(d) Finally, even though *Abba* is authentic Jesus language, that in itself does not enable us to say that the actual logion in which the word occurs is authentic (see below).

§5 Note on the Q hypothesis

Literature. P. Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle (*Münster 1972); 'Die Anfänge der Theologie in Logienquelle', *Gestalt und Anspruch des Neuen Testaments (*Würzburg 1969), 134-152; D. Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle (*Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969); S. Schulz, *Q. Die Spruchquelle der*

[49] RGG III[3], 643. Many exegetes support him in this. M. Lehmann even calls it the '*communis opinio*' *(Quellenanalyse,* 186).

[50] See especially Berger, *Amen-Worte,* and his criticism in this regard (152-163) of V. Hasler, *Amen. Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Einleitungsformel der Herrenworte 'Wahrlich ich sage euch'* (Zürich 1969).

*Evangelisten (*Zürich 1972), with: *Griechisch-deutsche Synopse der Q-Ueberlieferungen (*Zurich 1972); H. E. Tödt, *Der Menschensohn in der synoptischen Überlieferung* (Gütersloh 1959), esp. 212-245, 265-267.

Sharp criticism of the way the Q hypothesis is taken for granted and put to use may be found in G. Schille, *Das Vorsynoptiscbe Juden-christentum (*Stuttgart 1970); 'Was ist ein Logion?', ZNW 61 (1970), 172-182; 'Der Mangel eines kritischen Geschichtsbildes in der neutestamentlicher Formgeschichte', ThLZ 88 (1963), 491-502. A critique of the assumptions about *Formgeschichte* in the Q hypothesis is offered by E. Güttgemanns, *Offene Fragen zur Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Munich 1971[2]).

See also E. Bammel, 'Das Ende von Q', *Verborum Veritas,* Festschrift for G. Stählin (Wuppertal 1970), 39-50.

[101] A very different, complex hypothesis is proposed by P. Benoit and M.-E. Boismard, *Synopse des quatre êvangiles en français,* vol. 2 *(*Paris 1972), 15-60.

In recent years the Q tradition and Q source have been the object of renewed studies, especially of a synthesizing nature. From there has emerged a broad outline which is gaining increasing acceptance. As this book also utilizes the results of these critical exegetical researches where it seems necessary, a brief explanation of what precisely the Q hypothesis entails is warranted.

The Q hypothesis is a logical outcome of the synoptic problem. It was hinted at as early as 1794. It follows from the 'Two Sources' theory, namely, that Matthew and Luke used not only an obvious main source, the Markan gospel, but also a second source or *Quelle* (hence Q). This hypothesis (now virtually a 'scientific fact', despite uncertainty about the scope of Q's contents) rests on empirically analysable facts. Briefly: (a) Matthew contains the substance of 600 of the 661 verses in Mark, and Luke contains the substance of 350 verses from those same (Markan) verses. (b) Although Matthew and Luke often differ from Mark on detail, their deviations seldom concur. Had they done so, we would be justified in postulating some degree of mutual literary dependence; thus that would seem to be excluded. (c) Wherever Matthew and/or Luke diverge from Mark, each gives the non-Markan material a different position and sequence in his own gospel. Hence we may infer the priority of Mark over Matthew and Luke, globally at any rate, for each passage has its peculiar tradition history (thus Mk. 16:9-20 is a much later non-Markan addition). (d) But certain difficulties remain. In some matters of detail Matthew appears to enjoy priority. Mark's priority remains a hypothesis, so that the exegete can never proceed on the assumption that it is a fact; it has to be shown to be true in each individual instance. (e) There is another problem. About 200 verses which do not occur in Mark appear in both Matthew and Luke − often with a striking similarity or even word for word the same, although they do not insert

this material at the same points in their Markan material. Thus, besides depending on Mark, Luke and Matthew must at least be based on a shared tradition; this is known as the Q tradition. What is more, the often literal correspondences in this non-Markan material of Matthew and Luke are so striking that the form in which they knew this Q tradition must have been a written document: the Q source. Hence we have the 'Two Sources' theory (i.e. Mark and Q as sources for Matthew and Luke). (f) There are still further [102] difficulties. Although an additional hypothesis means a lesser degree of certainty, many exegetes implement it concretely and effectively: namely, Matthew and Luke also contain material that is peculiar either to Matthew or to Luke and is to be found nowhere else in the synoptic gospels. Thus the existence is postulated of SM (*Sondergut* or matter peculiar to Matthew) and SL (*Sondergut* in Luke); whether these are oral traditions or written sources has not yet been determined. Actually there is no postulate involved; the conclusions follow from a literary comparison of three existing documents, Mark, Matthew and Luke (but see below); (g) then again, it has become clear from analyses by S. Schulz that at some stage there was interaction between Q material and Markan material, which obliges us to refine the Two Sources theory somewhat. Also, according to the history of religions and tradition history the Q tradition is not a uniform whole. Various traditions converge in it; it consists of a primary Aramaic phase, a phase contributed by Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, and lastly a redactional (possibly gentile Christian) phase, although the resultant pluriform whole is subsumed in one specific, continuous christological project.

As we have seen, the Q tradition actually postulates nothing. The conclusions follow from literary comparison of the three existing synoptic gospels. Even so, could these literary phenomena not be accounted for on the basis of a different hypothesis? Because there are residual phenomena not covered by the Q hypothesis, experts continue to look for other solutions (e.g. the Synoptic Institute of the Theological Faculty at Nijmegen). P. Benoit and M.-E. Boismard have also looked in another direction: instead of the Two Sources theory they postulate four foundation documents: a Judaeo-Christian gospel text from Palestine (A), a gentile Christian revision of A (called B), an unidentifiable third document (C), and finally the Q source. What is more, the evangelists are said to have made use of these sources not directly, but via yet other intermediary gospels that relate and refer to one another in various ways. A very complex account of things, which it is difficult to implement in exegesis.

Section Three

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK IN TERMS OF THE METHOD, HERMENEUTICS AND CRITERIA DISCUSSED

This section concludes Part One, in which we considered method, hermeneutics and criteria; it also justifies the further division of the book into three parts. In the New Testament, after all, we have the testimony of people who found salvation − or grace − explicitly imparted by God in Jesus of Nazareth; which is why their hopes of salvation − critically confronted with Jesus' concrete manifestation in history − led them to call him 'the Christ, Son of God, our Lord'. Both the offer of salvation and the Christian response converge in a specific, 'conjunctural' hermeneutic and experiential horizon in the New Testament account. Hence a modern Christology, that is, reflection on the New Testament interpretation of Jesus, entails not only historico-critical study of what Jesus really is about (Part Two), but also of the conjunctural experiential horizon in which certain Jews, and later gentiles as well, reacted positively to the 'historical phenomenon' of Jesus of Nazareth, whether in terms of their own encounter with him during his earthly life and their experiences subsequent to his death, or of what was handed on to them concerning this Jesus by others (Part Three). It would appear from this that one constituent of a proper, faith-based understanding of Jesus Christ is a relation to an ever changing, ever new present. That explains why Part Four of the book is essential. [103]

That teasing apart the delicate web formed by the gracious reality on offer (in Jesus) and the assenting response of faith (on the part of Christians) is not a feasible enterprise becomes clear more especially in section 3 of Part Two: 'The kingdom of God takes on the appearance of Jesus Christ'. That subsection of

this book shows that, however necessary it is to seek a 'picture of Jesus' that will stand up under any historical criticism, ultimately no person can stand revealed in his true identity and innermost reality through an exclusively scientific, in this case historico-critical, assessment. The two aspects − both the imperative need for historical critique (along with criticism of the critique, since it entails its own presuppositions and worldview) and the insight that every human being in his irreducible identity eludes the scientific approach so necessary and indeed valuable in its own right − become evident in Parts Two and Three, and are consciously taken into account.

In the next two parts of this book, therefore, I shall be searching (in faith and in a critical spirit) for possible signs in the historical Jesus that might direct the human quest for 'salvation' towards what Christian faith proposes as a relevant answer when it refers us to a specific saving act (identified by Christians) undertaken by God in this Jesus of Nazareth. First and foremost, therefore, we must turn our attention to Jesus' historical manifestation (Part Two), not in the abstract but within the quite specific ongoing tradition in which he and his contemporaries were set − an experiential horizon which we (since Jesus at any rate, and as Christians) now call the Old Testament, albeit in its late Jewish or Judaic context (Part Three). When this has been clarified we shall be in a position to ask ourselves what Jesus of Nazareth might mean for us twentieth century men and women (Part Four).

Part Two

‘THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST’

Literature. Kl. Berger, 'Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund christologischer Hoheitstitel', NTS 17 (1970-1), 391-425; G. Fricdrich, 'Euaggelion', ThWNT II, 718-734; B. van Iersel, *Een begin* (Bilthoven 1973), 22-28; L. E. Keck, 'The introduction to Mark's gospel', NTS 12 (1966), 352-370; W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* (Göttingen 1956), 77-101; F. Muszner, '"Evangelium" und "Mitte des Evangeliums"', *Gott im Welt* (in honour of Karl Rahner), vol. 1 (Freiburg 1964), 492-514; R. Pesch, 'Anfang des Evangeliums Jesu Christi', *Die Zeit Jesu* (Freiburg 1970), 108-144; J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 215-220; H. Schlier, '"Euaggelion" im Romerbrief', *Wort Gottes in der Zeit,* Festschrift for K. H. Schelkle (Düsseldorf 1973), 127-142; R. Schnackenburg, 'Das Evangelium im Verständnis des ältesten Evangelisten', *Orientierung an Jesus,* Festschrift for J. Schmid (Freiburg 1973), 309-324; G. Strecker, 'Literarische Ueberlegungen zum Euaggelion-Begriff im Markus-evangelium', *Neues Testament und Geschichte* (Zürich-Tübingen 1972), 91-104; P. Stuhlmacher, *Das paulinische Evangelium,* vol. 1 (Göttingen 1968); Th. J. Weeden, *Mark-traditions* (82-85); U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostel-geschichte* (Neukirchen 1961). [107]

Whereas once it was customary to cite the authority of the church, in current Christian usage − both ecclesiastic and ecumenical – the authority invoked is 'the gospel'. This illustrates a change of attitude among Christians. In the four gospels the word 'church' hardly ever occurs (and then only in secondary texts), while *euaggelion* ('gospel' or glad tidings, good news, or indeed the verb 'to evangelize') is a key term. It also occurs in the very first phrase in the earliest gospel, its title as it were: 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ' (Mk. 1:1). Hence the current reversion to 'the gospel' should be welcomed. Of course, citing the gospel as the source of inspiration must not become just a vague slogan which − albeit in justified criticism of the churches' empirical manifestation − replaces the reference to the church with highly selective approaches in the gospels. But before we analyse the real meaning of the 'gospel of Jesus Christ', we should first determine the meaning of the concept *euaggelion* in the New Testament. [108]

(1) Mark's title, 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ', straightaway poses a grammatical problem. Is the genitive subjective or objective − glad tidings about Jesus of Nazareth, acknowledged as the Christ, or the gospel of Jesus Christ himself? This minor philological problem may have far-reaching theological consequences and, depending on the particular solution offered, deeply influence the interpretation of Jesus or the Christology.

Except for Mk. 1:14 ('gospel of God'), the expression 'the gospel' alluding to it in Mk. 1:15, and the title in 1:1 ('gospel of Jesus Christ'), Mark invariably uses '*the* gospel' in an absolute sense without any further qualification.[1] With just one exception Matthew, whenever he mentions 'the gospel', always appends a closer qualification, principally 'the gospel of the kingdom of God'.[2] Luke, on the other hand, appears to avoid the noun 'gospel'; in his gospel it is nowhere to be found, and appears only twice in Acts (15:7; 20:24). He makes far more frequent use of the verb 'to spread the glad tidings', 'to evangelize' *(euaggelidzesthai)*: ten times in the third gospel and fifteen times in Acts. This somewhat arithmetical exercise is nonetheless instructive. Apart from those passages in the synoptics that rely on Mark, the term 'gospel' never appears, whereas Mark actually employs it as a title for his work. In other words, every incidence of the expression in the gospels derives from the Markan tradition (or redaction). Paul for his part uses it independently and constantly (48 times in the authentically Pauline writings, and in 22 of these instances standing by itself without further qualification).[3] In the Q community the use of at any rate the verb 'to evangelize' forms a separate strand in the tradition, albeit only in the second Hellenistic and Judaeo-Christian phase.[4] The use of the verb, both in Luke and in the Q community, suggests the traditional context that gave rise to the term: an initially purely Jewish context in which the two notions, 'eschatological prophet' and 'preaching the good news to the poor', were linked together. This is the tradition complex that (apropos the eschatological prophet) we shall be considering in due course: Isaiah 61:1-3; 42:1-4; 49:1-2; 51:16; 52:7 and 59:21, texts which were already interconnected in Judaism and elicited a vocabulary comprising, for example, anointing (the Christ tradition),
[109] sending forth, Holy Spirit, calling and electing, kingdom of God, 'light of the world', the focal point being 'to bring glad tidings'. For the use of the verb by Luke and in the Q community finds support in the Septuagint version of the messenger tradition in deutero- and trito-Isaiah, the glad tidings which the prophetic *christus* or God's anointed conveys to the poor. 'Gospel' here suggests the prophetic ministry of the messenger who calls the people to convert to God.[5] In view of that context in Jewish tradition I find it surprising that historically the word 'gospel' came to be a specifically Christian term − the key word of the Jesus movement from the moment it embarked on its

[1] Mk. 8:35; 10:29; 13:10 and 14:9 (Mk. 16:15 is a later addition, although as far as the use of the term is concerned, completely in line with Mark). See also the actual context of the pericope on the anointing at Bethany: J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 210-215, to some extent disagreeing with that: R. Pesch, 'Die Salbung Jesu in Bethanien', in *Orientierung an Jesus,* 267-285.
[2] Mt. 4:23:9:35; 24:14.
[3] See Schlier, 'Euaggelion', l.c., 127; and P. Stuhlmacher, *Das paulinische Evangelium,* 56-108.
[4] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 199.
[5] See in a similar context of the history of tradition: Gal. 1:7 with 1:1; Rom. 4:24; 1 Pet. 1:19-21.

missionary enterprise in Palestine (a mission to all, including Jews of the Diaspora) and, later on, in its mission to the gentiles as well, which nonetheless entailed a different connotation of the word (see below). That is why the subsequent Christian development of this Old Testament prophetic term needs to be defined more precisely.

Except for Mk. 1:1 and 1:14-15, Mark consistently ascribes the use of the word 'gospel' to Jesus himself – which is not without significance. In Mark's view, then, the gospel is the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, that is, the good news which Jesus himself brings us from God. He also refers to the (church's) proclamation of the gospel (Mt. 1:14**;** 13:10; 14:9); that is to say, according to Mark, the kerygma, the church's proclamation is the gospel brought by Jesus of Nazareth himself. Of late exegetes have acknowledged that careful analysis of Mk. 13:10 and 14:9; Mk. 8:35; 10:29 and 13:9-10; and finally of Mk. 1:14 and 1:1 shows that the term 'gospel' is firmly rooted in a missionary context.[6] In Mark, as in Paul's writings, mention of the gospel really does imply that Jesus' message is intended for all, Jew and gentile alike; the gospel has worldwide, universal significance. This is grounded in the fact that to Mark Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection − for Paul virtually the crux of the gospel − are intrinsically bound up with the gospel which Jesus himself conveyed: through his person, his ministry, preaching and praxis. Thus 'gospel' includes not only the glad tidings proclaimed by Jesus himself, but also, and just as essentially, the Christian message concerning his suffering and death; it embraces the Christian conviction that Jesus lives, is risen again. The special significance of Jesus' death as an essential part of the good news is best illustrated by Mk. 14:9: in remembrance of this woman, who had anointed Jesus' feet at Bethany − interpreted by Mark as anticipating the embalming of a [110] dead body − her deed will be recounted wherever the gospel is preached. That she did this to Jesus is what makes her action evangelically unforgettable. What we are saying in effect is that 'gospel' is the story, as transmitted, of Jesus' earthly activity,[7] but also of everything that has to do with his death. From the Markan standpoint the Pauline Easter kerygma is an essential part of the gospel, which no less essentially comprises Jesus' activity throughout his life on earth and, above all, his message. For Mark the gospel is as much the gospel *of* Jesus as it is *about* Jesus the Christ, the crucified-and-risen one. This notion of 'gospel' functioning throughout the synoptics is broader and more apposite than the one-sided Pauline concept (determined partly by Paul's debates with his opponents).

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[6] U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* (Neukirchen 1963²), 69-70; Schnackenburg, 'Das Evangelium', l.c., 311, is therefore correct in rendering (contrary to Marxsen) not: the gospel *about* Jesus, but *of* Jesus; likewise Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 215-220. Yet (contrary to Schnackenburg's assertion) 'gospel' (*Evangel*) did not initially signify a mission to Jews *and* gentiles (see further on).

[7] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 210-215.

So the gospel came to be the message, directed to the entire world, of which Jesus is the content: his sayings, his acts, suffering and death, as well as the church's identification of this person, expressed primarily in its affirmation that he has been exalted to the presence of God.[8] (In Part Three this idea finds confirmation in the theme of the suffering servant as elaborated in the prophetic-Solomonic, messianic David tradition.) Indeed, the gospel has to do with the church's (post-Easter) proclamation of Jesus' own message, inseparably linked as it is with his person, hence with his death and resurrection as well. Mark puts the emphasis on Jesus' life as a *via crucis* that he trod and as something contemporary Christians are called to emulate. Interpretation of the rejection and death of Jesus lies at the very heart of the gospel. For the question is: what did God have in mind with this rejection and this death? That is partly why Mark calls Jesus' gospel 'the gospel of God' (1:14), primarily because Jesus' message proclaimed God's coming kingdom for the salvation of mankind, but also because in and through the death of this 'messenger from God' God apparently has something to tell us; and so it is an essential element of the gospel qua gospel of God. In contrast to Mark, Matthew prefers to speak of 'the gospel of the kingdom of God'. His concern is God's purpose or intention with Jesus. In our inquiry, therefore, we need to look closely at the question of the coming of God's kingdom and how Jesus' death relates to it. A gospel minus the proclamation of Jesus' death and resurrection is no 'New Testament', any more than one-sided or exclusive proclamation of the crucified-and-risen one can be described as 'the gospel'.
[111] The two together constitute the gospel of God, conveyed to us by Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. Thus 'The beginning' (Mk. 1:1)[9] − the title of the Markan gospel − comprehends the entire book (otherwise it makes no sense as a title; it does not refer exclusively or even primarily to the ministry of John the Baptist): this gospel has its beginning in the ministry of the 'advance messenger', the Baptist, as well as the subsequent ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, his message about the imminent kingdom of God, his travels and good works (a sign of the dawning kingdom), his day-to-day association with tax-collectors and sinners, his parables; all this provokes opposition and culminates in his suffering and death − yet above and beyond that rings God's message: this man is risen. On that note the gospel of Mark ends: all that is 'the beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ' (Mk. 1:1), which only now could be fully appreciated and thereafter proclaimed by the church as the good news, the gospel.[10] What Jesus himself said and did in the course of his earthly ministry was 'the start' of what the church now proclaimed about him. Thus the fundamental question is not

[8] Schnackenbarg, 'Das Evangelium', l.c., 317; Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 217-218.
[9] B. van Iersel, *Een begin,* l.c., 28.
[10] Schnackenburg, 'Das Evangelium', l.c., 323.

just what Jesus tells us about God, but along with that, what God says about Jesus − although this second (christological) question can only be answered via our answer to the first (and not the other way round).

The term 'gospel', then, vividly illustrates a point made repeatedly in Part One: the intrinsic connection between the Easter kerygma and the events that transpired in the course of Jesus' earthly life, remembered now in retrospect. Another striking fact, it seems to me, is that the word *euaggelion* as a technical expression (like the terms *christianoi,* Acts 11:26, and *ekklesia,* in their early Christian sense of Christ's congregation of Jews and gentiles),[11] had its source in the earliest circles of Greek-speaking Jews who became Christians and evangelized Palestine, most probably from among the so-called 'Hellenists', Judaeo-Christians from Jerusalem who fled in every direction after Stephen's martyrdom, to Egypt (Alexandria) and perhaps mainly to West Syria (Antioch, Damascus). It is significant, at any rate, that the evangelist Philip, one of the Hellenistic Seven (Acts 21:8; see 6:5), launched his mission among the Samaritans (Acts 8:5, 26-40) and pursued it elsewhere on the Mediterranean coast among Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora, with Caesarea as his headquarters. It was not among those engaged in the 'mission to the gentiles', but before that, in circles concerned with a limited mission to Palestine as a whole − more especially to the Diaspora Jews − that the notion of 'gospel' gained ground. In those quarters, too, arose the larger missionary enterprise [112] (Paul) aimed at the gentiles, which turned the gospel into what were indeed glad tidings for all mankind.

This somewhat lengthy introduction (still too short, however, to clarify all the nuances of the scriptural concept of 'gospel') seemed necessary because it presents the cardinal problem: is the point of the New Testament, hence of Jesus' appearance among us, his message, ministry and praxis, and his 'faithfulness unto death', or is it his resurrection − or should one conclude that this is a false dilemma, and if so, in what sense? In that case the question is whether faith in Jesus' resurrection does not contain a distinctive element that cannot be dropped without mutilating the message at the very core and centre of his ministry, leaving merely a 'husk' which, although it can orient and inspire people's lives, leaves us with only half of Jesus' actual life and message. Are we not bound to say, in fact, that without belief in Jesus the resurrected, exalted or ever living one, his ministry and life give occasion for gloomy resignation or despair rather than grounds for hope, since in the end his message was rejected and he himself put to death? If one does not, following the New Testament, apply to him the apocalyptic notion of resurrection from the dead and accept the reality that represents − the Christian tradition having

[11] See W. Schrage, '"*Ekklesia*" und "*Synagoge*"', in ZThK 60 (1963), 178-202.

radically modified the apocalyptic purport of the phrase − is Jesus not simply one among many immolated messengers of salvation, joy and deliverance − a reason for labelling everything 'absurd' rather than grounds for hope of a better future? One might argue, of course, that this long line of slaughtered prophets and heralds proclaiming a saving message from God, despite all the opposition and rejection they provoked, at least confirms the surmise that the human race simply will not have this, that it will not resign itself to the endless accumulation of injustice and misery; that mankind realizes that good, not evil, must have the final word. But if it does not include belief in the resurrection, is such a hope not the definition of what is known as utopia? And is it not living in hope of some 'final good', a salvation of whose reality we cannot be sure, since we do not know whether salvation is in fact possible? Does that not leave us with an inescapable vicious circle? Marcuse's 'great refusal', supported by utopian wishful thinking, would be the only way to make human existence at
[113] all worthwhile − as wishful thinking. Even then one is bound to admit that we − we who are still alive − may have some prospect before us and may therefore be sustained by such a utopian vision; but what future would there be for those fallen upon evil days, who no longer have any future? Who gives a future to our dead? Or do we include only those who, being alive in our world, may perhaps live to enjoy a happier lot and we just forget about the rest? Who would really call that 'ultimate good'?

These questions bring us to the fundamental problem: from what and for what has Jesus set us free? What ultimate good does he offer so that we today can still find salvation in him? In other words, what exactly is the good tidings, the gospel, of Jesus Christ?

(2) It should be clear from Part One that one cannot determine what constitutes the salvation that Jesus brings without considering how it relates to us here and now. The material content of the 'good news', salvation and gospel will change according to our concrete experience of its opposite. Early Christianity and the history of the Christian churches alike show us how greatly substantive descriptions of the salvation-experienced-in-Jesus vary. And for us too the story is ongoing.

Time and time again, therefore, both present-day longings for 'final wellbeing' and whatever the person of Jesus is about have contributed to a coherent view of salvation which is true to Jesus and yet pertinent to us as well. In that process God's offer of salvation in Jesus will subject our hopes to criticism. The question is whether the Christian interpretation of Jesus − the gospel − does not entail precisely those alienating factors which no human, scientific and technical intervention can obviate. Christians bring no glad tidings to present-day pagans when they inform them that (and how) Jesus was the fulfilment and consummation of all the age-old promises to Israel! Of

course we need to study the Jewish experience, because Jesus was manifested, concretely, in history: a Jew – hence sprung from and nurtured in Jewish spirituality. But the result of that study does not in itself represent the gospel of Jesus Christ. It brings no tidings for modern man, any more than if Jesus of Nazareth is depicted as a kind of embodiment of a modern – be it existentialist or socio-critical − norm for living. In these instances Jesus himself and the whole question of God that he raises bring us no good news. For what could this news be if, at the very core of our being as human persons today, our thinking is already existentialist or socio-critical? Thus it would seem we [114] invoke Jesus only as the one who confirms, guarantees and blesses the best − which, thank heaven, is still a vital and active reality among us − but then in the same way that the church used to bless the crusaders of old and their weapons of war. Then Jesus' promise and critique, focused and based on what we empirically are (and nowadays that is pre-eminently 'critical'), form no part of 'the gospel's' agenda. In that case the gospel is neither news nor gladdening, but merely endorses what I am (or we are) in either a conservative or a progressive perspective.

We Christians are evidently powerless to convey to present-day people with creative faithfulness − despite and along with its criticism of our human condition – the gospel as glad tidings (except verbally: by authoritarian talk about a gospel and glad tidings that, in deference to the authority of the New Testament, *must* be accepted). This certainly appears to be the basic reason why our churches are running empty. Who is still going to listen to what no longer comes across as cheering news − especially when it is backed up with a peremptory appeal to the gospel?

So in this second part we first examine Jesus' historical message and conduct, which issued in his arrest and execution, and then ask how the sum of all this could have been experienced as salvation at that time. Only then, in the next part, shall we be able to consider how we can still experience salvation in these ancient Jesus events today.

Section One

WHAT JESUS PROCLAIMED AND HOW HE LIVED

Chapter 1

JESUS' MESSAGE OF GOD'S COMING SALVATION

A general grasp of the period in which a remarkable individual operated is always important if we are to locate and identify him in his authentic humanity yet distinctive uniqueness. But even in such a general framework the distinguishing features and public image of that person are primarily illustrated and explained by concrete circumstances, chance or planned encounters, specific and as it were localized incidents. [115]

However, Jesus' earlier life prior to what we can establish historically about his ministry is almost completely unknown to us. His birth in Bethlehem is a Jewish *theologoumenon,* an interpretive view, not a historical fact. That his home was in Nazareth is not altogether certain, but is highly probable. The first solid historical fact about Jesus is that he let himself be baptized by John, son of Zechariah, known as the Baptist. Although we don't know how Jesus came into contact with John or what impelled him to seek out the Baptist in the Jordan valley – for, in contrast with Jesus' own later ministry, John did not travel around the countryside but was sought out (Mt. 3:5; Lk. 3:7; Mk. 1:5) − the fact is that John's baptism of Jesus is the first noteworthy historical starting point for our understanding of him as Jesus of Nazareth.

Since Jesus fully assented to John's religious appeal, it must have made an extraordinary impression on him; after all, he let himself be baptized. This could not have been just play acting by someone who actually knew better. John's message about baptism as conversion must have been a 'disclosure experience' for Jesus, a revelatory or source experience, an orientation for his own life. To grasp the implications of this act as the initial step in Jesus' own prophetic ministry requires, firstly, a rough yet fairly accurate sketch of the historical and religious background to John's baptismal movement and his ministry. [116]

§1 Prophetic and apocalyptic penitential movements in Israel

Literature, (a) *Conversion and baptismal movements.* O. Betz, 'Die Proselytentaufe der Qumrânsekte und die Taufe im Neuen Testament', Qumrân 1 (1958), 213-234; H. Braun, 'Die Täufertaufe und die Qumrânischen Waschungen', *Theologia Viatorum* 9 (1964), 1-18; '"Umkehr" in spätjüdisch-häretischer und in frühchristlicher Sicht', *Gesammelte Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* (Tübingen 1967²), 70-85; J. Delorme, 'La pratique du baptême dans le judaisme contemporain des origines chrétiennes', *LVie* 26 (1956), 21-59; J. Gnilka, 'Die essenischen Tauchbäder und die Johannestaufe', *Qumrân* 3 (1961), 185-207; J. Thomas, *Le mouvement baptiste en Palestine et Syrie* (Gembloux 1935); (b) *Prophetic context.* F. Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel (*Anhang) (Gottingen 1963), 351-403; M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (Tübingen 1973²); *Charisma und Nachfolge* (Berlin 1968); O. H. Steck, *Israel und das Gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten* (Neukirchen 1967); H. W. Wolff, 'Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk', ZAW 73 (1961), 171-186; (c) *Apocalyptic context.* J. Bonsirven, *Le Judaisme palestinien au temps de Jésus-Chris,* (Paris 1934); S. Frost, *Old Testament apocalyptic, its origins and growth* (London 1952); Kl. Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* (Gütersloh 1970); E. Lohse, *Umwelt des neuen Testaments* (Göttingen 1971), 37-50; 'Apokalyptik und Christologie', ZNW 62 (1971), 48-67; U. B. Muller, *Messias und Menschensohn in jüdischen Apokalypsen und in der Offenbarung des Johannes* (Gütersloh 1972); O. Plöger, *Theokratie und Eschatologie* (Neukirchen 1959, 1962²), Schmidt, *Die jüdische Apokalyptik, Die Geschichte ihrer Erforschung von den Anfänge bis zu den Textfunden von Qumrân* (Neukirchen 1969); J. Schreiner, *Alttestamentlich-jüdische Apokalyptik* (Munich 1969); G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Munich, I 1957, II 1960); D. Rössler, *Gesetz und Geschichte, Untersuchung zur Theologie der jüdischen Apokalyptik und der pharisäischen Orthodoxie* (WMANT, 3) (Neukirchen 1960); H. H. Rowley, *The relevance of apocalyptic* (London 1952²); Ph. Vielhauer, 'Die Apokalyptik', in E. Hennecke-W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen,*
[117] II (Tübingen 1964³), 405-427, 428-454; W. Zimmerli, *Grundrisz der alttestamentlichen Theologie* (Stuttgart 1972), 199-217.

Historically it is undeniable that both the Christian Q community and Matthew and Luke understood the roles played by John the Baptist and Jesus (as well as by their own Christian church) in light of the already much older, eschatologically oriented Chasidic movements in Judaism centring on *metanoia,* repentance or conversion (Lk. 13:34-35; 6:22; Mt. 11:18-19; see also Lk. 9:58; 11:31-32). From specifically Jewish as well as profane sources we know that ever since the Maccabean period a number of baptismal movements had been

operative in the Jordan valley.[1] John followed a line of already traditional revivalist movements that arose after the destruction of the first temple (587 BC), always proclaiming some new call to *metanoia*.[2] The inspiration underlying all these movements was the Deuteronomic school with its insistence that Israel had killed the prophets and as a people had disobeyed God. To counter the defection the prophets proclaimed the necessity of a return to God. The point of departure for this particular development is 2 Kings 17:7-20 (a passage in the Deuteronomic tradition): it ponders the fall of Israel's northern and southern kingdoms, interpreted as a punishment for the disobedience of God's people. This Deuteronomic view of history had its first (literary) outcome in Neh. 9:26,30 (afterwards in Ezra 9:11), passages that link Israel's defection from God and subjection to his wrath with the theme of the killing of the prophets and urgent demands for *metanoia* or conversion to God. This recurs in every successive writing in the Deuteronomic tradition.[3] A basic element is the perception of the prophet as a preacher of repentance, conversion and obedience to God's law. Ignoring this prophetic summons incurs the threat of God's annihilating judgment. This view became universal in later Old Testament works, including the so-called 'inter-testament' literature of Judaism. Before and during Jesus' time it inspired all sorts of revivalist movements.

Especially during the period from the Maccabean uprising (167 BC) to the Jewish war culminating in the destruction of the temple (AD 70) and the second Jewish rebellion led by Bar Kochba (AD 135) the conversion movement acquired markedly apocalyptic overtones: before the end of the world Israel is to be presented just once more with a divine offer of grace-leading-to-conversion; after that it will be too late, for the end is at hand.[4] This prospect also raised expectations of an 'eschatological prophet', who would announce a [118] final opportunity for *metanoia*. An Israel who had totally abandoned God and his law would be summoned to return to the 'true law' of God that no human laws may abrogate.

John the Baptist's ministry falls within this specific line of spirituality in Judaism. Because of the already traditional idea of the defection of all Israel and the concomitant problem of God's law, Jesus' own period, seen in the Judaic context, posed three fundamental questions which no one with a message for Israel could avoid.[5]

(a) First there was the real-life confrontation with pagan, foreign, anti-

[1] See above, literature under (a) 'conversion-movements'.
[2] Literature under (b) 'prophetic context'.
[3] Jer. 25:4a,5-6; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Zech. 1:4-6; 7:7,12; 2 Chron. 36:14-16.
[4] Steck, *Gewaltsames Geschick,* 184-189, 196-225; Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,*15.
[5] J. Blank, *Jesus von Nazareth,* 95ff.

Yahwist domination, successively by Persians, Greeks and Romans. From a Yahwistic standpoint − Israel being exclusively Yahweh's property and legacy − such a state of occupation was intolerable, also, one might even say primarily, on religious grounds. After all, for Jews there could be no meaningful distinction between religious and political factors; nor could anyone wanting to bring Israel a message in that spiritual and socio-political situation avoid taking some sort of a stand on the issue.

(b) At the heart of the aforementioned reformist movements was a zealous devotion to the Law**.** Ever since the resistance to Israel's Hellenization under Antiochus IV the 'zealous of Israel' had intensified their call for fidelity to the Law. Fervent devotion to the Law, to the ancient Jewish traditions (in the face of all pagan, non-Jewish modernisms) was a prime requirement for those − Pharisees, Essenes and various other groups − who were set on being 'true to Yahweh'. The notion of the holy remnant was in its heyday.[6] Despite a nonreligious 'we, the holy remnant' mentality, this − in the constellation of that time fairly 'conservative' − movement was nonetheless prompted by genuinely Jewish religious motives, more particularly fervent commitment to the one and only God Yahweh, Jerusalem and his temple. All the same, these devotees of Yahweh were by no means united in outlook or agreed on a programme of action. The Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora viewed 'the Law' very differently from the Jerusalem Jews, who spoke Aramaic.[7] For these Greek-speaking Jews, inclined as they were to *philanthrōpia,* universal 'love of humanity', a good deal of what the others were accustomed to call 'the Law' was actually incompatible with the Law proper, that is, with God's decalogue,
[119] the ten commandments. In Galilee, as opposed to Jerusalem, this Greco-Jewish outlook was in fact the 'accepted thing' (which was why Judea could not expect any good to come out of Galilee, hence out of Nazareth). That Jesus' disciples were not punctilious about the various ways of hand washing before meals was not something they had taken from Jesus but simply 'Galilean' (in contrast to Jerusalemic orthodoxy).

(c) Finally there was 'apocalypticism': diverse views of every sort concerning the 'turn of the ages', in the sense of the end of the world.[8] All the Jewish groups − Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots − were to some extent familiar with apocalyptic ideas, although not all could be described as apocalypticists. (Up to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 the Pharisees were hotly opposed to apocalypticism; only after that date did they start thinking in apocalyptic terms, albeit very soon in an orthodox way.)

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[6] A. Vögtle, *Das öffentliche Wirken Jesu auf den Hintergrund der Qumrân-Bewegung* (Freiburger Universitätsreden, 27) (Freiburg 1958), 5-19; M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus,* 563.
[7] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung* (argument of the book as a whole).
[8] See literature above under (c) 'apocalyptic context'.

In its historical context apocalypticism was a universal trend in the mental and spiritual outlook of the ancient East. Jewish apocalyptic was only one, if perhaps the most explicit, variant. I must dwell a little on this subject, because after AD 70 apocalyptic literature became popular, especially among Christians, who saw this Jewish literature as supporting and nurturing their faith in Christ, which by then had assumed fixed forms. It was in reaction against such use of the Jewish apocalyptic books by Christians that the rabbis eventually, in the second century, attacked this literature − the reason why practically all Hebrew and Aramaic versions have disappeared and only the Greek, Ethiopian and Slavonic versions (read by Christians) have been preserved. The Ethiopian Church still regards the Ethiopian Enoch (an Ethiopian translation of an originally Aramaic book of Enoch) as part of canonical Old Testament scripture. The New Testament writings, especially those later than AD 70, show obvious signs of apocalyptic influence.

What is apocalypticism? Who is an apocalypticist? He is one who regards himself not as a prophet but as an interpreter of the ancient prophets. He does not want to be a prophet and so, in order to legitimatize his message, makes use of a pseudonym − which automatically means that he can propagate his ideas only in written form; hence he is not a preacher or public speaker. Apocalyptic, then, is essentially a literary genre, expressing a particular view of history.

The substance of apocalypticism was characterized by long experience of human life, an experience which had ceased to look for any improvement in [120] human history. Suffering and every kind of calamity, whether individual or national, were so persistent that one had to postulate at the source of mankind's history a fall of the first man, which snowballed through the ages (4 Ezra 4:30; Syrian Baruch 23:4). Thus Satan with his entourage obtained power over this world. These evil powers did battle with the pious, those faithful to the Law; the whole purpose of their struggle was eventually to get Jerusalem the holy city in their power. It was no longer possible to hope for any good from human history. All hope was fixed on the 'turn of the ages', that is, a sudden divine intervention, which would totally annihilate this history, 'this age' (cf. Shiva, the Indian deity, who once danced his perverted world to smithereens in order to construct a completely new one in its place), so as to create from scratch a brand new heaven and earth, a 'second aeon', like the earthly paradise before the fall. 'The Most High has created not one aeon, but two' (4 Ezra 7:50).

But just as Israel's sin was the cause of present calamity, so a turn-about, *metanoia* and religious zeal could hasten the time of salvation (in Zech. 1:3; see Jubilees 23:26-29; Enoch 90:35, 38). In an apocalyptic context expectation of the end and the call to *metanoia* went hand in hand, just as prophecy and summons

to *metanoia* were conjoined in pre-apocalyptic times. (For that reason alone not every urgent call to *metanoia* should be given an apocalyptic interpretation.)

Apocalypticists *interpreted* human history; we would be justified to speak of a 'theology of history'. They saw world history in demarcated periods, a clearly defined series which nevertheless, obscurely, constituted a historical unity. A typical example is Daniel 2:31-35, where an apocalyptic prophet depicts past history as a statue of terrifying appearance. Its head, to be sure, is of pure gold, but its breast and arms are already of silver, its belly and loins of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron, partly of clay: these are the empires from the neo-Babylonians to Alexander the Great in the Hellenistic age, seen however as a single statue, that is, a single, unified history of rising and vanishing world empires. But then, peering more closely, this visionary or interpreter of history perceives that 'a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces; then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and
[121] the wind carried them away . . .' (Dan. 2:34-35). The text then proceeds to expound the meaning of that vision (2:36-45): God will put an end to all those kingdoms and take command himself: 'The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people' (2:44). Then follows, in typical apocalyptic vein: 'The dream is certain and its interpretation sure' (2:45). (Later on, for instance, among the Hellenistic Judaeo-Christians, this became: 'Truly, truly I say to you . . .', a typical apocalyptic formula of legitimation.) Each time the parousia, that is, the manifestation in power and might of God's kingdom, failed to materialize, expectation of the end, instead of being stifled, grew more feverish; but each time there were fresh nuances, intended to account for the delayed parousia. Typical in this respect is 1QpHab 7:7-14 (a commentary − *pesher* − on Habakkuk, found in the first cave at Qumrân): 'The final End is taking more time than the prophets predicted, for marvellous are God's mysteries . . . The last days will come according to God's appointed time.' The fact that instead of the actual dawn of this final kingdom there was ever greater oppression was in its turn given an apocalyptic interpretation. For according to late apocalypticism the establishment of God's kingdom would be preceded by a period of mounting horrors (4 Ezra 5:4-5), 'eschatological woes': father turning against son, brother against brother, no peace anywhere; flowers and trees would wither, women no longer give birth; the old world order would die. Whatever still survived would be locked in conflict. Finally the cosmos would burst apart at the seams. But then the pious would know that God's kingdom was at hand, God's new world for the zealous of Israel. All sorts of originally astrological numbers − 12 (months), 7 (days), 4 (seasons), with subdivisions as

arcane clues (three and a half years is half of 7, etc.; 12 times 7 is 84, etc.) – would tell the pious when the end was due. The final woes themselves, for instance for Daniel, would last only three and a half years (Dan. 7:25; 12:7), that is, a short while. But only God knows the 'length of days'; history is in his hand. The 'Assumption of Moses' (10:1-10) depicts the end, 'when God's dominion over all will be made public'; then 'all sadness will be removed − the devil vanquished − "the heavenly one" will rise up from his throne; the world will begin to quake, mountains tumble down, the sun cease to give light, the moon split in two and grow blood-red, and the whole firmament be thrown into chaos; all waters disappear, for the Most High has risen up to punish the heathen. Then, Israel, you shall have good fortune … and you shall be exalted to the starry heavens. And thence you shall look down and see your enemies below; and you shall laugh and give thanks to God, your Creator' (see also [122]
Dan. 7:11). Sometimes this final act includes the figure of a messianic judge. Daniel 7:13-14 speaks of 'one like a human being' (Greek: son of man). As opposed to animals (Dan. 7:4-8) (i.e. the four great heathen empires), this eschatological ruler (Dan. 7:14) has a human form and aspect: he is, on the analogy of Israel's celestial *archon,* Israel itself, the people of the saints of the Most High (Dan. 7:27) who are to rule the world on God's behalf. Israel is the people of the coming eschatological age (see Part Three: the son of man). However, in the parable section of the (Ethiopian) Enoch (chapters 37-71) the son of man is set over against the people of God and described as a person: the eschatological judge. The visionary of the book of Enoch sees, alongside the Ancient of Days, 'another, whose countenance was like that of a man, and gracious, it seemed, like that of a holy angel' (46:1), and he hears: 'This is the son of man, who possesses righteousness ... and who shall reveal all the hidden treasures, for the Lord of spirits has chosen him... This son of man, whom you have seen, shall thrust kings and mighty ones out of their place and the strong from their throne' (46:3-4). But although he is a judge, for the faithful he is their redeemer, who leads his own on to freedom to celebrate the messianic banquet with them (62:13-16): he will reign as a new king of paradise (69:26-29) (see also 2 Baruch 73:1; Ezra 7:33; cf. Rev. 20:11).

After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (AD 70), far from total disillusionment, the expectation of the end acquired a new fecund fervour. (Only then were 4 Ezra, the Syrian Baruch and the New Testament Apocalypse written and apocalypticism got a hold on the Pharisees, who up to then had opposed it.) Apocalypticism may well have been the original reason why the earlier Chasidic movement split into a Pharisaic school and the apocalyptic movement proper. When Christians, who already believed in the risen and glorified Jesus, read this, they must have felt greatly heartened: because for them it all had to do with Jesus Christ. And that they did read it is borne out

by a quotation from the Enoch apocalypse in the New Testament (Jude 14-15; allusion to Enoch apocalypse, 1:91).

Many people nowadays see the apocalyptic concept of the two aeons as dualistic. The ethical dualism − a struggle between good and evil − is unmistakable: it is the warp and woof, the very stuff of all human history. But in contrast to non-Jewish apocalypses, 'this aeon', like Satan himself, was
[123] created by God, though it had manifestly turned away from him. Again, to this apocalyptic mentality there is a veiled connection between events on earth and a supra-mundane, a-temporal order, in which a host of good and fallen angels influences terrestrial history. In particular the 'angel of the peoples' *(archon* or angelic guardian of the nations) exerts a crucial influence at moments of crisis in their history (see Dan. 10:20-21; Enoch 89:59ff; Rev. 16:14). However, when the eschaton − that is, the radically new age − dawns the boundaries between earthly and celestial history are blurred. Good men now live in company with the angels, they shine like stars in the firmament (Dan. 12:3; Enoch 50:1; 51:4). After the final catastrophe, therefore, there is a new state of affairs. Conditions are reversed: those who weep now will laugh; the poor will be rich, the mighty downcast. The paradisal situation is eschatologically restored; and the pious among non-Israelite nations also share in this eschatological age; they share Israel's good fortune, or rather that of the faithful remnant of Israel; for the chosen people is no longer the whole nation, only the devout 'holy remnant'. Daniel 3:10f (also 4 Ezra 4:26ff*)* makes it clear that God's kingdom, albeit hidden, is already operative. At the final parousia, when God or his chosen one publicly ascends the throne, God's lordship will become visible on earth (Dan. 7:14; Enoch 4:1; see Rev. 11:15); all earthly empires will be abolished. This dominion of God at the close of the age is his 'coming in glory', when all the structures of society will be changed (Jewish social critique of non-Jewish domination is unmistakably evident, although this literature is meant primarily to console and encourage people with the reassurance that, despite all painful experience, God alone is Lord of history and has the last word). In some apocalypses this final kingdom is still an earthly one, a kind of messianic, this-worldly salvation history; in others the messianic kingdom is lacking and the coming aeon is celestial, supra-mundane from the outset; yet others see the messianic kingdom being realized in a 'new heaven and new earth', a life on earth but minus all mundane features.

'Apocalypse', then, is the pre-eschatological disclosure of the real background to all terrestrial history, which the apocalyptic visionary imparts here and now in his writings: he has been granted a vision of this background for the benefit of the elect. The eschatological drama is apocalyptically
[124] unveiled for the sake of their faith, reassuring them that, with God's coming, salvation will be possible. Thus 'paraenesis' or moral inspiration, an ethical

orientation, is fundamental to apocalypticism; always the gist of its heartening message is 'Blessed is the one who endures to the end' (Dan. 12:12). So apocalypticism is a religious philosophy of life ('apocalyptically' reiterating a lot of old prophetic ideas) – but only one current among many others at that time, though certain ideas were popularized in this way or absorbed into the general worldview.

Whatever one may think of apocalypticism, at bottom its experience is existential and realistic, even 'modern': if God is the source of all life, then why so much cruelty, inequality, pain and suffering, unhappiness, misfortune and woe, why so much discord in our nature and in human history? Apocalypticism wrestled with this problem: it sought a solution in its conception of 'this' and the 'coming aeon' or radically new world. In modern terms the apocalyptic expectation that the end of the world is near is a utopian yearning for an end to the history of human suffering, to all affliction, oppression, war and wretchedness. In positive terms it is hope of the dawn of a 'kingdom of peace', a commonwealth of happiness, of all that, given the long and above all obdurate history of suffering, we can hope to receive from God alone.

Such messianic, apocalyptic expectations are not unique in human history. Sociologists of religion have noted a phenomenon occurring periodically among every people, which they have called a 'messianic pattern'.[9] These sociological studies have shown that in extreme situations of social and political malaise radical movements of a messianic nature commonly occur at critical junctures in the history of most peoples. There are, of course, tonal variations, both socio-political and mystically inward; the scope, too, may be universal or narrowly nationalistic. Even so, these radical messianic movements exhibit a more or less invariable basic pattern. Schematically simplified, the basic messianic pattern looks something like this. Socio-political situations of economic and especially of cultural and spiritual weakness and loss of identity are always marked by radical movements with a messianic aspect, movements that dream of an imminent, radically new world, because the 'old world' has become utterly intolerable. They engender ardent longing: [125]
a liberated, redeemed life is about to begin. In such situations of malaise fantasy flares up, utopian images arise: visions of a realm of peace, righteousness, happiness and love such as never was seen. A movement of this sort often crystallizes around a single mediator acting as a saviour, who is expected to make everything turn out right.

Historians and sociologists of religion have found that in fact all radical

[9] Especially H. Desroche, *Sociologies religieuses* (Paris 1968); *Dictionnaire des messies, messianismes et millénarismes de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris 1968), 1-40; *Sociologie de l'espérance* (Paris 1973).

messianic movements, whether promising inner or socio-political liberation, have failed. Not only did they fail to achieve an earthly paradise or kingdom of peace and righteousness, but the bombshell experience of a completely new world was always a short-lived dream. Besides, after the initial flare of enthusiasm the mystical or socio-political messianic flame died down − or was violently extinguished. Does that apply also to Jesus of Nazareth?

It would be unhistorical, a misjudgment of Jesus' true humanity, to ignore the fact that John's and Jesus' movements made their appearance in this climate. From the angle of the history of religion they represent particular manifestations of the apocalyptic, eschatological expectation of Judaism at that time. Uniqueness and originality, transcendence even, do not mean that they were not historically conditioned and rooted in history. On the contrary, 'being a child of his time', a Jew in a Judaic apocalyptic world characterizes the newness of John's and Jesus' message in all its particularity.

But the difficulty raised by an initial approach to Jesus via John the Baptist is that, in John's case, we are even more in the dark about his precise message than in the case of Jesus. The reasons are obvious. Firstly, except for a few aftereffects that lasted until the third century, John did not touch off a movement of his own, so that there were no people to transmit the authentic tradition of his charismatic ministry (in contrast with the Jesus movement). Secondly, the available data about John (reliable enough no doubt, but calling for careful interpretation) are known to us almost entirely via the Christian understanding of him in the New Testament, focusing from the outset on Jesus − an interpretation less concerned with John's personal career and public ministry than with his role as forerunner of Jesus, and therefore his inferior. Very probably some competition gradually ensued, reflected particularly in the
[126] Johannine gospel, between John's disciples and those of Jesus (after his death). Even so, critical scrutiny of the gospels does yield a specific, essentially accurate picture of John's message and praxis, apart from certain exegetically much disputed points.[10]

§2 Message and praxis of John the Baptist

Literature. J. Becker, *Johannes der Täufer und Jesus von Nazareth* (Neukirchen 1972); H. Braun, 'Entscheidende Motive in den Berichten über die Taufe Jesu von Markus bis Justin', *Gesammelte Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* (Tübingen 1967[2]), 168-172; W. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist in the new light of ancient scrolls', in K. Stendahl, *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (New

[10] Once more I refer to H. Marrou, and to A.W. Mosely, who has examined the trustworthiness of ancient historical writings (Part One, Section One, note 15).

York 1957), 33-53; I. Buse, 'The Markan account of the baptism of Jesus and Isaiah LXIII', JTS 7 (1956), 74-75; C. Cranfield, 'The baptism of our Lord', ScotJTh 8 (1955), 55-63; J. Daniélou, *Jean-Baptiste* (Paris 1964); G. C. Darton, *St John the Baptist and the kingdom of heaven* (London 1961); M. Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Ueberlieferung von Johannes der Täufer* (Göttingen 1911); A. Feuillet, 'Le baptême de Jésus', RB 71 (1964), 321-352; J. Jeremias, 'Der Ursprung der Johannestaufe', ZNW 28 (1929), 312-320; E. Käsemann, 'Zum Thema der urchristlichen Apokalyptik', in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* II, (Göttingen l954; collected articles 1960), 105-31; Fr. Lentzen-Deis, *Die Taufe nach den Synoptikern* (Frankfurt 1970); E. Lohmeyer, *Das Urchristentum,* vol. 1, *Johannes der Täufer* (Göttingen 1932); C. McCown, 'The scene of John's ministry', JBL 59 (1940), 113-131**;** C. Scobie, *John the Baptist (*London 1964); J. Sint, 'Die Eschatologie des Täufers, die Täufergruppen und die Polemik der Evangelien', in K. Schubert, *Vom Messias zum Christum* (Vienna 1964), 55-163; J. Steinmann, *S. Jean Baptiste et la spiritualité du désert* (Paris 1955); W. Trilling, 'Die Täufer-Tradition bei Matthäus', BZ 3 (1959), 271-289; Ph. Vielhauer, *Johannes, der Täufer,* RGG³, III, 804-808; A. Vögtle, *Das öffentliche Wirken Jesu auf dem Hintergrund der Qumranbewegung* (Freiburger Universitätsreden, N.F., H 27) (Freiburg 1958); W. Wink, *John the Baptist in the gospel tradition* (Cambridge 1968).

John's message and his way of life are closely interrelated.[11] The New Testament has preserved memories of his baptisms, his style of dress, diet, lack of possessions and the place of his ministry. So when interpreting John's message, his lifestyle as observed and interpreted by his contemporaries [127] provides a hermeneutic key.

John's activity is located 'in the wilderness' (Mt. 11:7 and parallels); that is to say, his ministry accords with the Exodus tradition.[12] The wilderness is the site of the anticipated future, of the eschatological 'new beginning' and total transformation. This in itself implies a choice of spirituality: what governs John's activities does not stem from the spirituality centred on the temple, Jerusalem, Zion (also a focus of eschatological future expectation in Judaism) but from the wilderness spirituality. In line with this is his ascetic way of life: he has no belongings, does not work for a living, scorns cultivated products like bread and wine (see Lk. 7:33 and parallels) and lives on what the wilderness provides: snails or locusts and honey (Mt. 3:4). He dresses in camel hair with a rough (i.e. natural) cord round his waist, typical apparel of a

[11] In the exegetical literature this aspect has been examined in particular by J. Becker, *Joh. der Täufer,* l.c., 16-26.

[12] Isa. 40:3-4; 41:18-19; 43:19-20; 48:20-21; 49:10-11; 51:10-11; Hosea 2:14; 12:10. See: ThWNT II, 65 5-6.

prophet.[13] All this in itself is an 'eschatological demonstration' by someone who knows he is a prophet. And that is how he comes across to the later Christians.[14] Place and personal appearance are eschatological in character: the man's whole life is directed to the future, leaving all that precedes it – the past and the present − for what it is, ignoring it and living wholly by and for the future. The present is occupied only with *metanoia,* conversion, exodus, leaving behind all that is and journeying towards that future.

What is that future? John does not seem to have proclaimed the kingdom of God.[15] The core of his message is captured, it seems, in a Q passage: 'He [John] said therefore to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves: We have Abraham as our father; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire' (Lk. 3:7-9 and Mt. 3:7-10, 11-12). John is the penitential preacher prophetically announcing the imminent judgment of God. The future is God's wrath, his inexorable sentence.[16] The fact that one is a child of Abraham, one of God's own people is no guarantee of salvation or exemption from this judgment. We have noted already that such ideas are not new to Israel. It is a traditional Jewish vision, at any rate in the tradition complex of the Deuteronomic view of history,[17] not a Christian interpretation of John's preaching. In this tradition a
[128] prophet is one who calls to repentance. The Q text faithfully renders the core of John's message.

Even so, this typical prophetic theme, borrowed from earlier traditions,[18] had little currency in Jesus' days.[19] There was something provocative about John's behaviour, therefore. The term 'brood of vipers' in particular is uncommonly harsh, in that for Jews it was pagans who were compared with animals ('dogs', see Mk. 7:27; Mt. 15: 26). Here Israel is branded 'pagan'. John has the divine sentence of annihilation − which according to the ideas, especially the apocalyptic ideas, of the time is to descend on the heathen −

[13] See 2 Kings 1:7-8 (the typical leather girdle of Elijah); Zech. 13:4 (a hairy mantle as the mark of a prophet).
[14] Mt. 11:9 par.; ML 6:15 and parallels 11:32 par.; Lk. 1:76; Jn. 1:21-25.
[15] On one occasion, in Mt. 3:2, there is mention of John's proclamation of God's rule; clearly a Matthean redaction intended to harmonize John's message with that of Jesus.
[16] Mk. 1:1-8 presents (as is frequent enough; see Hoffmann, *Q-Studien,* 14; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 370, n. 317) a condensed version of Q material. Starting from his concern with Christian baptism, he puts more emphasis on John's baptismal activity than on his preaching of judgment. On 'generation of vipers', see Foerster, in ThWNT II, 815.
[17] Sirach (Ecclesiast.) 36; Psalmi Salomonis 8: 17; also O. Steck, *Gewaltsames Geschick,* 188-189, 286, n. 1.
[18] Ezek. 33:24; Amos 4:1; Isa. 1:10-23; 54:3-4; 57:3; see Mt. 12; 34 and the secondary Mt. 23:22.
[19] Lohmeyer, *Joh. der Täufer,* 58-59 and 129-141.

rebound on to the Jewish generation itself; it cannot hide behind the alibi of God's promise to Abraham. 'Bearing fruit' (a Semitic expression for good works that can avert God's punishment; see Gen. 1:11-12), doing penance (and to that end getting baptized) are the only way to ward off calamity. John is no purveyor of a gospel or glad tidings of salvation, he is a prophet of doom, threatening mankind with looming divine judgment. That is evident in his message and his whole way of life. Neither is his rejection of the alibi of being a member of God's people new in Israel; it was actually a 'tradition' in Chasidic or religious circles ever since the Maccabean period. Qumrân too, even the Pharisees, were familiar with this judgment on the whole of Israel.[20] The traditional principle of Israel's divine election is not under attack − not by John the Baptist who, after all, addressed his message exclusively to Israel whilst denying the automatic guarantee offered by this election, in line with the prophets of yore. The fierce attack remains typically Jewish.

A salient feature of the Baptist's resumption of ancient prophetic traditions is the term 'already' or 'even now': it is about to happen. (This is classical prophecy. With reference to Mt. 3:10, see especially Isa. 43:19 and 55:6.). The axe is already laid to the tree. 'The tree to be cut down' is a typical Isaiahan expression for the judgment of God (Isa. 10:33-34; also Dan. 4:11,14-20).

It is noticeable that throughout the New Testament evaluation of John the motifs are not specifically apocalyptic but early prophetic. The 'axe', the 'winnow'[21] and the 'fire' − three key words used in the New Testament to convey John's proclamation of judgment – are not apocalyptic but classically prophetic. Fire and wrath, in an Old Testament context, are typical images of God's approaching judgment. That judgment is about to take place.[22] Whoever is not baptized with water − so John proclaims − will suffer the baptism of fire, that of the eschatological judgment. The ancient prophets linked this notion of [129]
God's judgment at the end of time − a baptism of fire − with three images: the burning up of the chaff after harvesting,[23] a conflagration in which every withered and barren tree will be consumed[24] and, thirdly, the image of the metal furnace.[25] Of these Old Testament images of the threatening, looming divine judgment John the Baptist adopts two, with the concomitant *metanoia* or call to repentance.[26] Remarkably enough, he does not take up the idea of the

[20] See Strack-Billerbeck, I, 392-396; Steck, *Gewaltsames Geschick,* 286, n. 1; 188-199; C. Westermann, *Grundformen prophetischer Rede* (Beih. EvTh, 31) (Tübingen 1964²). Israel stands self-accused of murdering the prophets (1 Kings 19:10; Neh 9:26); thus the New Testament (Mt. 5:12; 23:31-32,34,37; Acts 7:52; James 5:10; Hebr. 11:36f.; 1 Thess. 2:15-16) concurs with a Jewish critique.
[21] See Isa. 30:24; 41:15-16; Jer. 15:7; 51:33; Micah 4:12-14; Joel 3:13.
[22] Amos 8:2; Isa. 40:3-5.
[23] Isa. 5:24; 10:17; 47:14; Nahum 1:10; Obad. 18; Mal. 3:19.
[24] Isa. 10:18-19; Jer. 21:14; 22:7; Ezek. 21:2-3; Zech. 11:1-2.
[25] Isa. 1:24-25.
[26] Mk. 1:4 par.; Mt. 3:2,8 par.; Acts 13:24; 19:4.

purifying fire (associated with metal smelting); John mentions only the fire that consumes all. Cosmic ideas of a 'global holocaust' are foreign to him: what concerns him is God's judgment on mankind: that, too, is not apocalyptic. John's preaching as conveyed by the New Testament contains no trace of the apocalyptic 'two aeons' doctrine. Only the righteous − those whom John has baptized − are going to survive the conflagration and the tree-felling. Actually, the wrathful John does not even give that assurance; explicitly, his message refers only to the trees that are to be cut down! In succession to the majority of Old Testament prophets he is a 'prophet of doom', herald of approaching calamity for every 'unrighteous' person. And the calamity will not even be foreshadowed in pre-eschatological signs and warning events. This is no apocalypticist but a prophet of the old school.

Yet with respect to the classic prophetic tradition John does contribute a new element: the need for baptism, more specifically 'the baptism of John'. Immersing oneself in water from motives of *metanoia* had been a known practice in Jewish circles for some time already. But here it is John (in person or with help from his disciples) who baptizes; and this is new. Hence his nickname, 'the Baptist' (mentioned even by Flavius Josephus), because it was customary for people to immerse themselves. Here we have baptism by John. He 'preaches baptism' (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3; Acts 10:37; 13:24). Baptism is an essential part of his call to conversion. Apocalypticism may be radical, but John is even more so: only his baptism offers the possibility (not even the certainty) of escaping God's sentence of annihilation by fire. This betrays an explicitly prophetic self-understanding. One may wonder whether such a message − uttered in the concrete situation at that time − does not imply criticism of Pharisaic, Zealotic and other Jewish expectations current in those days. Apart from Matthew 3:2, repentance is always associated with the baptism of John. John 'baptizes with water for repentance' (Mt. 3:11), in other words, conversion supplies the meaning of the baptismal act. Having oneself baptized by John,
[130] the man sent from God, means letting oneself be changed by God; a human being cannot do this himself. Repentance is understood here as a free gift from God. In the later Jesus tradition, too, it is said that John's baptism is 'from heaven' (Mt. 21:25 and parallels; see below). For this prophet and baptist the 'one thing necessary' is *metanoia,* converting, repenting and being baptized − a penitential baptism. In view of the imminent judgment everything else is a waste of time, even the Jewish circumcision, albeit signifying election by God.

In a certain sense John resembles deutero-Isaiah: people of God, think no longer of your past salvation history, of God's mighty acts in your history; think only of 'what is to come': the axe is laid to the root of the tree (Isa. 43:18-19). This people have thrown away even the Isaiahan 'last chance'; now they face the verdict pronounced on their conduct. The orientation is still typically

Jewish: it concerns the children of Abraham, whom God can produce, if need be, from stones.[27] Without the baptism of *metanoia* Abraham's children are no different from the heathen.[28] In his originality John is still of the classic prophetic school. Of course he belongs to a new and different period, an apocalyptic one, but he brings to it the most authentic elements of Israel's ancient prophets of doom − with a view to salvation.

Yet that very distinction − 'with a view to salvation' − raises a question about the Baptist. John does not disclaim the prospect of salvation which Israel's great prophets had always kept open: but nowhere does he spell out what it entails, according to the New Testament record (which in this regard may be influenced by the different impression John, as opposed to Jesus, had made on the latter's disciples).

We are not dealing with a (for that time) 'modernist', apocalyptic spokesman,[29] but a penitential preacher motivated by the ancient prophets of Israel. John's thinking undoubtedly focuses on the future − but it is eschatological, not apocalyptic. There is no question of apocalyptic peering into the future, no end-time wonders, only the raw prophetic announcement of doom. He does not stop to consider the possibility of salvation for those who escape God's inexorable judgment. That judgment obsesses him: what human being can withstand this measured, objective verdict? John does, of course, admit a possibility of salvation; if he did not, there would have been no point in his baptism. The background is the Old Testament injunction: 'Seek me and live' (Amos 5:4-5). But, like the Baptist, Amos the ancient prophet of doom had already said: even the remnant of Israel is to perish (Amos 5:18-20; 6:1-14). In this doomsday preaching the prospect of salvation remains 'veiled': it is not [131] explicitly stated, whereas in Israel's ancient prophecies it was never passed over in total silence.[30] This absence of a promise of ultimate salvation in John's preaching (see Mk. 3, citing a text from Isa. 40:3) may be historical but may also be a Christian (Jesus-centred) overlay. Luke 3:5-6 cites the whole Isaiahan context, with the result that the Baptist, too, proclaims a gospel, a joyous message. The only element that might point to a prospect of salvation is the mention of the 'eschatological *pneuma*' (see Lk. 3:16 and parallels), but this is probably a Christian interpretation of John.[31]

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[27] A play perhaps on the Hebrew words for 'child' *(son=ben)* and 'stone' *('eben)*. A similar kind of word play occurs in the image of the 'rejected (corner-) stone' (Mk 12:10 with Ps. 118:22; Lk. 20:18 with Is. 8:14).

[28] See as far back as Amos 9:7-10; Jer. 7:1-15.

[29] E. Käsemann calls John simply an apocalypticist: *Besinnungen,* II, 99, 108-10.

[30] J. Behm and E. Würthwein, *metanoia,* in ThWNT IV, 972-994; H. Wolff, 'Das Thema "Umkehr" in der alttestamentlichen prophetie', in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Th. B. 22) (Munich 1964); H. Braun,' "Umkehr" im spätjüdischhäretischer und in frühchristlicher Sicht', in *Gesammelte Studien zum NT und seiner Umwelt* (Tübingen 1967[2]), 70-85.

[31] J. Becker, *Joh. der Täufer,* 22-6; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 370. This seems to me by no means certain. The

This line of enquiry brings us to a second aspect of John's preaching, as the New Testament sees it: it refers to 'him who comes', to one mightier than himself. The Q community (Lk. 3:16=Mt. 3:11), Luke and Matthew speak of this; but so do Mk. 1:7 and Acts (Acts 13:25). The question arises whether the proclamation of the 'one who is to come' is a Christian interpolation pointing to John the Baptist as the eschatological prophet, the forerunner of the messiah Jesus − clearly problematic for Jesus' disciples, who in their transcendently loftier evaluation of their master, Jesus of Nazareth, nonetheless had to come to terms with the fact that he had been baptized by John. On this point the facts recalled in the New Testament have been given a Christian slant, although the Christian interpretation is not meant to negate or cover up the remembered evidence of history. Anyone who for apologetic reasons wanted to do that would have done better to ignore John's baptism of Jesus altogether. Yet none of the early Christian congregations suppresses this fact, even if they sought (not without some embarrassment, apparently) to give it a new, Christian interpretation.

We cannot be quite certain, therefore, whether John himself did proclaim 'the one who is to come'. At any rate there are Christian allusions to John as the forerunner of the (earthly or coming) Jesus. Still, the heralding of the eschatological judge − 'who judges as by fire' − accords perfectly with John's message of judgment. Historically we know that expectations of the coming of Elijah were current among John's disciples; here we certainly have a (pre-Christian) tradition regarding John.[32] Besides, the idea of a forerunner of the end-time mediator (albeit usually regarded as a saviour) is not specifically Christian, but Judaic. So while the interpretation is Christian, the model for it is pre-Christian. The designation of 'the one who is coming' as mightier may itself be the result of Christian interpretation of the Baptist. That is why I
[132] assume that John probably did speak of 'the coming one'.

But who is this coming one, from John's own perspective? It cannot be the coming of God in person but rather the coming of God's official emissary, the eschatological mediator or intermediary, known in apocalyptic circles as the son of man.[33] *Ho erchomenos,* the coming one, was already a popular technical

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ancient prophets talk not just about being cleansed from guilt by *water* in the end-time (Isa. 4:4; Ezek. 36:25-26; 47:1-12; Zech. 13:1) but also about *the pouring out* (like water) of the Spirit (Zech. 12:10-12; 13:1-6; Joel 3:1-2). See P. Reymond, 'L'eau, sa vie et sa signification dans l'ancien testament', in VTS 6 (1958), 233-238; see also J. Gnilka, l.c., in RQum 3 (1961), 196-197.

[32] Bultmann, *Tradition,* 123, considers it to be a (pre-Christian) John tradition; also Dibelius, *Joh. der Täufer,* 53-57. It is called a Christian tradition by Hoffmann, *Q-Studien,* 20; Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* 31; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,*371-372; V. Hasler, *Amen,* 55. See immediately below, note 44.

[33] J. Becker, *Job der Täufer,* 34-37; U. Müller, *Messias und Menschensohn in jüdischen Apokalypsen und in der Offenbarung des Johannes* (Gütersloh 1972), 36-60; J. Schneider, in ThWNT II, 664-672. That the New Testament identifies 'the one who is to come', of whom John speaks, with Jesus is obvious. In the oldest layer of the Q source, however, he is identified not with the earthly Jesus but with the coming Jesus-son-of-man figure, living with God: Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 377. One is struck by the fact

term among the Jews for a coming eschatological figure,[34] but in this context not seen officially as a saviour but as a judge, coming with winnow and sickle in hand, the fire of judgment ready to consume all chaff. These are all prophetic images of the final judgment. The one who comes is thus unmistakably a judge. In the Old Testament and in Judaism no one qualifies for this unless he is either God himself (but this is ruled out by the anthropomorphic context: 'whose sandals I am not worthy to undo', Mt. 3:11; Lk. 3:16; Acts 13:25; in the New Testament, of course, the 'anthropomorphism' may be prompted by the Christian identification of 'the coming one' with Jesus himself!), or the eschatological messenger from God (about whom people could and did speak in anthropomorphic terms). Only the son of man qualifies for the role of such an eschatological judge. Thus we may suppose John himself to have taken over the idea of the son of man, developed in earlier Judaism, albeit phrasing it more vaguely as 'the coming one'. If so, John himself would have paved the way for the later Christians to interpret him as forerunner and Jesus as the son of man. It is actually in Dan. 7:11, in the context of Dan. 7:13-14 to which Judaism gave a son-of-man interpretation, that we read of a torrent of fire as the medium for exercising judgment on the fourth beast.[35] John, a prophet rather than an apocalypticist, by invoking the son of man and agent of fiery judgment takes over what is in fact an apocalyptic idea, linking the old prophetic notion of judgment with the coming son of man. Hence this is no Christian innovation, but already existed in Judaism. The sole Christian element is the identification of the coming one with Jesus himself and with that the interpretation of the Baptist as his forerunner.

By way of the Christian interpretation, then, we can adequately discern the broad features of John's preaching of the baptism of *metanoia* as the way to escape the fiery baptism of judgment. With all this John had only Israel in view, not the heathen. The 'coming judgment', often treated as Israel's consolation for the coming destruction of the gentiles, is turned by John the Baptist into a weapon against the people of God, or rather – considering the [133] individualizing trend at that time − against the individual Israelites: membership of God's people, of Israel, is no guarantee of salvation. This proclamation conveys God's unconditional and sovereign transcendence, not to be tied down to human ideas of salvation, not even when they can to some extent justifiably refer to Yahweh's historical saving acts and dealings with his

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that speculations regarding the coming Elijah (based on Mal. 3:23-24=Mal. 4:5-6) were current among the followers of John the Baptist (U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte,* Neukirchen 1963², 153-156), which confirms the assumption that John himself spoke of 'the one who is coming'.

[34] Mt. 3:11; 11:2-6; Lk. 7:18-23; cf. Mk. 1:7; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:15, 21.

[35] Becker, *Joh. der Täufer,* 36. Again there are references to the call to repentance in the son of man tradition (Eth. Enoch 50).

people. The only way to approach God − so John's message goes − is with the fruits of repentance.

After what at that time felt like a long absence of 'prophets', John comes with a graphic expression, in word and deed, not of apocalypticism but of explicitly Jewish age-old prophecy. Amos, no less grim and fierce than the Baptist, had already declared: 'The day of the Lord ... is darkness and not light' (Am. 5:18-20). Eschatological hope without right conduct is exposed to the critique of this prophetic tradition. Triumphalist belief in election is put in jeopardy. Every religious claim to assured salvation and the power of 'Israel's devoted zeal' is critically challenged by this arch-earnest prophet of gloom. Nothing will do but *metanoia,* an about-face, giving one's life a direction quite different from the normal rule; self-criticism, *metanoia* with an eye to the future, the coming judgment. John gives the living God a prophetic aura, wholly non-magical and (to use a modern term) 'non-establishment'. This grim prophet John the Baptist demolishes all prevailing notions of divine annihilation of 'God's enemies' − the foes of Israel − and of Israel's final triumph over all its adversaries, worldwide messianic dominion. The whole of Israel must be moved once more to confront the living God.

John, living in an apocalyptic age, is essentially not an apocalypticist. He has none of the typical features outlined above: he is a (penitential) preacher, speaks on his own authority without need for legitimation, and apart from the concept of the coming one we encounter no typically apocalyptic ideas. The so-called *Naherwartung* or nearness of the end is itself a prophetic datum (cf. the 'even now' of Mt. 3:10 with the 'now' of Is. 43:19 and with Is. 55:6). Concepts and images used by John − conversion, Israel's state of total calamity, God's imminent judgment which the unrighteous or unrepentant will not escape, the annihilating judgment (by fire) − all these are deutero-Isaiahan prophetic elements which, whilst incorporated into an apocalyptic context, are not in themselves apocalyptic. John's immediate, historical source of inspiration
[134] eludes us: we are ignorant of John's previous history and background; we do not know whether he really comes from a priestly family (as Lk. 1:5 intimates). We are bound, of course, to note his striking affinity with deutero-Isaiahan ideas. Given all this evidence, we are surely obliged to characterize John's self-understanding as that of a prophetic charismatic in line with the earlier Chasidic movement.[36]

The message of judgment and offer of baptism are the hallmarks of John's ministry: he is both prophet and baptist. What is unique about him is that he does the baptizing himself. The possibility of escaping God's wrath is severed from its connection with the Abrahamic promise to the whole nation and is

[36] Becker, ibid., 56-61.

individualized via a new bond − baptism by John, engagement with total change, transformation. This baptism is the last chance God offers to escape the approaching catastrophe (see Mk. 1:4 and parallels; Lk. 3:8). Implicit in John's whole movement, therefore, is an unprecedented repudiation of the Jerusalem temple cult and propitiatory offerings. What is new in John's *metanoia* preaching compared with the Deuteronomic and Chasidic tradition in which he stands, is the quite extraordinary mediating role he assigns himself: John's baptism is 'necessary for salvation', getting baptized by John has a (difficult to define but nonetheless real) bearing on one's own fate at the coming judgment. All this John does and says 'on his own authority'. In this regard the story about the question of Jesus' competence (Lk. 20:1-8) is pertinent. This tradition has Jesus respond with a counter question: 'Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' (Lk. 20:4). The scribes avoid answering, whereupon Jesus says: 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things' (Lk. 20:8). Form criticism reveals, on the strength of the same story in Mk. 11:27-33, that 11:27-30 (the source passage) originally related to 11:15-16 (the cleansing of the temple); in the Johannine gospel, too, the cleansing and the question of Jesus' authority are closely interrelated.[37] Mark 11:28 harmonizes well with Mk. 11:18a. The cleansing of the temple thus serves the function of introducing the controversy over Jesus' right to act the way he does. According to this pericope Jesus takes for granted both his own and John's prophetic authority (see also Mt. 11:13; 16:14). Furthermore, the passage contains no Christian attempt to represent John simply as Jesus' forerunner. This attests the authenticity of the scene. Jesus sees an objective correspondence between the baptism of John and his own ministry. Both have full prophetic authority. What is more, there is an implicit reference to the [135] historical fact that, in a sense, Jesus is following in the footsteps of the Baptist. Recognition of John's authority must entail recognition of Jesus' authority; even the scribes perceive that, so they wisely refrain from answering Jesus' question. This is certainly the drift of the argument. Just as John's baptism was a prophetic sign intended to bring about Israel's end-time repentance and conversion, so Jesus sees his ministry (in this case the cleansing of the temple) as such a prophetic sign and summons to complete transformation.

John the Baptist, then, is a non-messianic figure, no Zealot either, and apolitical in his immediate message: he stands outside Zealotism, outside messianism and outside apocalypticism. His message was a frontal assault on three basic expectations in contemporary Judaism: the eschatological expectation of the destruction of Yahweh's, and therefore Israel's, foes; Israel's own final victory and worldwide dominion; the guarantee of salvation entailed

[37] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 90-93. Thus the oldest form of the pre-Markan account is: Mk. 11:15-16,18a, 28-33.

by the promise to Abraham. All this, past and present, John shakes to its foundations; he thinks and lives solely in terms of the future, occupied with God's inexorable and, interpreted prophetically, temporally imminent judgment, from which no one in all Israel can escape. For John the future is a possibility exclusively from God. Hence present and past are subject to the criticism of God's future, here denoted by an apocalyptic term 'the coming one' (in virtue of the judgmental perspective, obviously to be read as 'son of man'). Even prior to John the son of man was the linguistic symbol for God's final judgment. Hence the 'coming one' is kept vague (John offers no apocalyptic portrayal of this person). However, this exclusive concentration on the future does affect the present: conversion here and now! That is why one can fairly say that John links the idea of eschatological expectation with the demand for orthopraxis. To John eschatology becomes a moral, religious appeal. God's future is conjoined with ethics.[38] The magical, apocalyptic feature of a sudden forceful intervention by God is not detectable in John's preaching. One could even say that in the Baptist apocalypticism was reduced to its essential religious core, stripped of every trace of apocalyptic! God radically judges man, who refuses to judge himself.[39] John the prophet forges an intrinsic link between future expectation and ethical-religious commitment − yet from an exclusive perspective of judgment, not from the religious perspective of God's graciousness and love. In that respect Jesus would not follow John the Baptist.

[136] Finally, we know that the Baptist was put to death on the orders of king Herod (who in terms of the *ius gladii* had the power to behead); besides the gospels, various secular sources mention the event.[40] Interpretations of John's imprisonment and execution differ. According to the New Testament version he was arrested because he had accused king Herod of taking his brother's wife (Mk. 6:17); he is also said to have been beheaded because Herod fell for a ruse prearranged with the help of a dancing girl. The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that John baptized and thereby attracted so many people that Herod was afraid John's power over them might incite them to rebellion, for 'they were ready to do whatever he asked'; 'for that reason he had him shut up in the fortress of Macheron'.[41] Historically, this would seem to be a more likely motive; but even so it is not entirely unconnected with what the gospels say. Not only does Mk. 6:20 speak of Herod's fear of John (though perhaps superstitious fear of a holy man; in Mt. 14:5, however, it is fear of the multitude), but the historian Josephus (independently of the gospels) also

[38] J. Blank, *Jesus von Nazareth,* 102.
[39] Ibid., 102.
[40] Josephus, *Antiquities,* 18:5,2.
[41] Ibid.

mentions, apropos the Baptist, Herod's passion for Herodias, his stepbrother's wife, and his divorce from his previous wife (daughter of king Aretas). In revenge this king inflicts a severe military defeat on Herod,[42] and Josephus comments: 'Many Jews saw in that a much deserved punishment for the murder of John the Baptist.'[43] This popular opinion is presumably the basis of the tradition incorporated by Mark. A hard core of historical fact is the execution of the Baptist by the tetrarch Herod Antipas. John's violent death was to be important later on for Jesus' self-understanding.

§3 Jesus' first prophetic act: his baptism by John

The preceding section was necessary to help us understand the extraordinary fact that Jesus had himself baptized by John. This baptism was not just an incident in his life. Although baptism by John in itself did not mean that the person baptized became John's disciple, it seems likely that he did have an entourage of disciples who may have assisted in performing the baptisms (Mk. 2:18; Mt. 11:1-2; Jn. 1:35; 3:22). We can probably also assume that Jesus' own earliest disciples, or some of them, came from that group (Jn. 1:35-51). It is impossible to determine historically whether Jesus himself was a 'follower of John' and so baptized as one of his assistants, or at any rate carried on some such activity alongside John, as the Johannine gospel says (Jn. 3:22-36; see 4:1- [137]
2). That claim reflects a pre-Johannine tradition, in which Jesus is seen as initially a disciple of the Baptist.

The fact of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, however, is quite certain; and this is a primary hermeneutic key to understanding Jesus − only a primary one, for Jesus cannot be explained simply in terms of the Johannine movement, any more than he can be understood without the Baptist. John's preaching spoke to him personally, and he identified personally with John's call for conversion. This we must take seriously. If we do not, his baptism would appear to have been either some sort of play acting by someone who really knew better (at most an act of public humility, but with something bogus about it) or else (there can be no other alternative in that case) a 'youthful error' or even a first flush of religious fervour which turned out not to be the real thing, so that Jesus afterwards chose a different course.

Anyone prepared to see this step taken by Jesus as a serious and important decision is bound to recognize that for him the baptism must have been a

[42] See J. Gnilka, 'Das Martyrium Johannes' des Täufers' (Mk. 6:17-29), in *Orientierung an Jesus,* (78-92, 84-85 and especially 90-91). The story of the banquet at which a dancing girl was put up to asking for the head of John was a later interpolation; viewed within the history of tradition, it turns out to reflect certain well-known, popular legends.

[43] *Antiquitates,* 18:5,2.

disclosure experience, a source experience that was revelatory. In the absence of sources the historian can neither affirm nor deny anything about Jesus' life prior to his baptism. His undergoing that baptism was not, of course, his first religious experience. But we do not know how he saw himself up to that moment, except indirectly through our knowledge of the upbringing of Jewish youngsters at that time.[44] Historically the first point to make, then, is that Jesus was struck by the aptness of John's proclamation and for that reason let himself be baptized by him. Thus he identified with a type of preaching which, as we have seen, was essentially non-apocalyptic and non-messianic and simply had in view human beings' proper relationship to the living God and to one another, that is, doing God's will. That the gospels incorporate John's message and in particular make no secret of the fact that Jesus was baptized by John, despite the problems this would have posed for them after the events of Easter (being hard to fit into their vision of Jesus as Christ), can only be explained by one overriding reason: the historically based memory of what was for Jesus an important event in his life, namely the realization that the Baptist's eschatological preaching of *metanoia* was indeed crucially significant for Jesus' own historical, public ministry − for the two facts (baptism and public ministry) are manifestly connected in the New Testament. Being unable
[138] to probe into Jesus' own psychology (for want of material evidence), we must look for the point of this historically recognizable connection. Nothing permits us to see in this step taken by Jesus the first breakthrough of his prophetic self-understanding (or to deny it). About the 'beginnings' of Jesus' sense of vocation the historian can say nothing − only that his public ministry as a prophet is manifestly connected with his baptism in the river Jordan. So it seems to me legitimate to ask, in view of the subsequent course of his life and its plainly prophetic character, whether the baptism itself was not his very first public prophetic act: not simply assenting to the acknowledged earnestness of John's preaching (although that is presupposed), but in that very assent an independent prophetic act. Instead of seeing this baptism as a first explicit breakthrough of Jesus' special calling − as many liberal Jesus scholars maintain − I hazard a different solution.

Prophets tend to combine their sayings with striking symbolic actions. By way of enacted prophecy Jeremiah carries a yoke on his shoulders to let all Israel know that it was 'held captive'. This yoke is Israel's captivity (Jer. 28:10; 27:2). Hosea marries Gomer, a prostitute − that is, an Israelite girl who had had herself initiated into the fertility rites of the Canaanite Baal cult − in order to make it publicly known that, despite everything, Yahweh still holds Israel dear (or else to suggest that Israel has so far defected from Yahweh that only girls

[44] A (rather mediocre but) suggestive outline of this was provided by R. Aron, *Les Années obscures de Jésus* (Paris 1960).

initiated into paganism remain to be found) (Hos. 1:1-9). Isaiah remains unmarried and thus declines to have a family, so as to show Israel how spiritually poor, desolate and barren she is.[45] Of Jesus we are told that, not long before he is finally rejected, he curses a fig tree, which by the next day, withered and wretched, is a living image of Israel or of Jerusalem that will not acknowledge the proffered chance of salvation.

In this light the historical fact of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, in what is for us its revelatory character, assumes theological significance. It is Jesus' first appearance as a prophet: a symbolic prophetic action or an enacted prophecy, through which he intimates that all Israel requires a change of heart and must return to God, as the Baptist demands. As a prophetic act, in which Jesus submits to 'the baptism of John', his baptism is confirmation of Israel's apostasy, but also of its repentance and thus of salvation. Fundamentally this goes a great deal further than what John himself intended with his baptism. Justifiably, albeit in a post-Easter interpretation, the gospels surround John's [139] baptism of Jesus with explanatory visions, setting them in the aura of paschal glory (Mk. 1:2-11; Mt. 3:13-17; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn. 1:29-34). The only way to accommodate the baptism of Jesus in a coherent picture of his prophetic ministry is to consider its *prophetic* character. It by no means implies that Jesus' message is the same as John's or that subsequently they parted ways; what it does mean is that Jesus concurred with the core of John's message of *metanoia* baptism and saw it as being 'from heaven' (Lk. 20:4). John the Baptist's movement, then, is the 'locus' of God's first saving revelation to us in Jesus. Mark rightly sees the Baptist's ministry as part of 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ' (Mk. 1:1); it is not to be separated from Jesus' first appearance in the role of prophet.

The people, too, were immediately struck by the differences between John and Jesus. A New Testament pericope reminds us of this. Whereas John impressed his contemporaries as being strictly ascetic, Jesus was perceived as 'an eater and drinker', especially in the company of tax collectors and sinners (Mk. 2:16). Some played the one prophet off against the other, to avoid having to listen to either. In their parable of the children playing in the market-place[46] Mt. 11:16-19 and Lk. 7:31-35 (from the Q source) vividly express the obvious difference: '... this generation ... is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates: We piped to you and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say: He has a demon! The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say: Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' If John

[45] See G. Fohrer, *Die symboliche Handlungen der Propheten* (Basle-Zürich 1953).
[46] According to Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* 29, in essence one of Jesus' own parables; see Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 228-229; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 379-386.

came across to the people as a grim ascetic, in complete harmony with his message of God's imminent, inexorable judgment, hence as a lament, Jesus comes across as a song! This parable, in its essentials most likely an authentic parable of Jesus, illustrates the basic difference between the prophet of woe and Jesus the prophet of salvation. For here, too, Jesus' differently oriented way of life must relate to the distinctive orientation of his message.

[140] §4 Underlying impulse of Jesus' message and preaching

Like John, Jesus' life and words are oriented to God's future and thus, like his predecessor, he subjects both past and present to prophetic criticism. For Jesus, as for John, that future is possible only as something deriving from God. He criticizes all other orientations and projects that do not proceed from the priority of God's future for mankind. The coming judgment is part of Jesus' overall message, but it functions very differently from the way it functions in John's proclamation. And that brings us to the question of the core of Jesus' message.

The focus of Jesus' message is an *euaggelion,* that is, in contrast to John, cheering news from God: 'God's lordly rule is at hand.' We find this, verbatim, in no less than five tradition complexes: that of the Q community,[47] the Markan tradition,[48] the source peculiar to Matthew,[49] the source peculiar to Luke[50] and the Johannine tradition,[51] as well as in the New Testament letters. The kingdom of God is Jesus' central message, with the accent on its coming and its imminence. In other words, 'expectation of the end' is an expectation of the approaching kingdom of God. And for Jesus this means the closeness of God's unconditional will to salvation, of compassionate outreach and proffered mercy and, along with this, opposition to all forms of evil: suffering and sin. This calls for more detailed analysis.

A. GOD'S RULE DIRECTED TO HUMANENESS: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Literature. J. Becker, *Das Heil Gottes* (Göttingen 1964); J. Blank, *Jesus von Nazareth. Geschichte und Relevanz* (Freiburg 1972); Th. Blatter, *Macht und Herrschaft Gottes* (Freiburg 1962); P. Brunner, 'Elemente einer dogmatischen Lehre von Gottes Reich', in *Die Zeit Jesu* (eds G. Bornkamm and K. Rahner) (Freiburg 1970), 228-256; R. Bultmann, *Theologie,* 2-10; H. Conzelmann,

[47] Lk. 6:20 and Mt. 5:3; Lk. 7:28 and Mt. 11:11; Lk. 10:9 and Mt. 10:7; Lk. 11:20 and Mt. 12:28, Lk. 13:18, 20 and Mt. 13:31,33; Lk. 13:28 and Mt. 8:11; Lk. 16:16 and Mt. 11:12.
[48] Mk. 1:15; 4:11; 4:26; 9:1,47; 10:14; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43; etc.
[49] Mt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:19-20; 19:24; 21:31; 21:43.
[50] Lk. 4:43; 9:2,11,60,62; 14:15; 16:16; 17:20; 19:11; 22:16,18.
[51] Jn. 3:3 and 5.

Grundriss; C. H. Dodd, *The parables of the kingdom* (London 1935ff.); H. Flender, *Die Botschaft Jesu von der Herrschaft Gottes* (Munich 1968); M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leyden-Cologne 1961); J. Héring, *Le Royaume de Dieu et sa venue* (Neuchâtel 1959²); E. Käsemann, 'Eine Apologie der urchristlichen Eschatologie', *Besinnungen,* I, 135-157; 'Die Anfänge christlicher Theologie', ibid., II, 82-104; 'Zum Thema der urchristlichen Apokalyptik', ibid., II, 105-130; G. Klein, ' "Reich Gottes" als biblischer Zentralbegriff', EvTh 30 (1970), 642-670; W. Knörzer, *Reich Gottes, Traum, Hoffnung, Wirklichkeit* (Stuttgart 1970); J. E. Ladd, *Jesus and the kingdom* (London 1966); E. Lohse, 'Die Gottesherrschaft in den Gleichnissen Jesu', EvTh 18 (1958), 145-157; W. Pannenberg, *Theologie und Reich Gottes* (Gütersloh 1971); N. Perrin, *The kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus* (London 1963); Kl. Schmidt, sub *basileia,* in ThWNT I, 579-593; R. Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich* (Freiburg 1967⁴); Ph. Vielhauer, 'Gottesreich und Menschensohn in der Verkündigung Jesu', *Aufsätze,* 55-91; A. Vögtle, *Das Neue Testament und die Zukunft des Kosmos* (Dusseldorf 1972); E. Wolff, on 'Reich Gottes', in RGG³, V, 918-924.

God's 'lordship' or rule and the kingdom of God are two aspects of what the New Testament encapsulates in the single concept *basileia tou Theou*.[52] Mark and Luke speak of the *basileia,* the kingly rule, of God. Peculiar to Matthew is 'the kingdom of heaven', where 'heaven' is a late Jewish abstract designation of God. *Basileia tou Theou* is the kingdom of God, God's lordship, the realm of God. It does not denote a sovereign realm above and beyond this world, where God supposedly resides and reigns. What Jesus means by it is an *event* in which God begins to govern and act as king or Lord, hence an act in which God manifests his Godhead in the human world. Thus God's lordship or dominion is the divine power itself in its saving acts in our history, and *at the same time* the final, eschatological state that brings to an end the evil world, dominated by the forces of calamity and woe, and initiates the new world in which God 'comes into his own': 'your kingdom come' (Mt. 6:10). God's lordship or rule and the kingdom of God, therefore, are two aspects of one and the same reality. His lordship refers to the dynamic, here-and-now character of his rule; the kingdom of God refers to the final state of bliss which forms the basis of his saving action. Thus present and future are essentially interrelated (in a manner still to be more closely defined): God is the lord of history and by proxy grants salvation to human beings. This is the gist of the – to us foreign − biblical notion of the 'kingdom of God'.

God's lordship, then, is the exercise of his distinctive divine function as [142] sovereign creator: as 'king' he is purveyor of salvation to that which he endowed with life. That this kingdom comes means that God looks to us

[52] See e.g., A. Vögtle, *Das Neue Testament,* l.c., 144-166.

humans to implement his 'rule' in our world.

Lordship, along with power, was a key concept in antiquity. To us these concepts are actually off-putting. They have an authoritarian ring to people who have only recently come to benefit by the freedom gained by the French Revolution: *'Nous voulons une humanitè sans (Dieu ni) roi'* (J. Ferry). Hence we can legitimately look for different terms, provided the idea of God's sovereign rights as creator are not undermined; reverence for God's sublimity is fundamental to Jesus' message and ministry. Of course, Jesus interpreted this sublimity as unconditional goodwill towards human beings, as perfect, pure love for mankind. But this also means that to Jesus God's lordship and sublimity entail doing God's will. God's lordship is not a function of man's salvation in the sense that God is an 'instrument' for human salvation. Jesus is intent on God's business; and the business of mankind, the *humanum,* is to seek God 'for God's sake'. In other words, God's lordship is sufficient in and of itself; the rest is gratuitous. Jesus is the man who delights in God himself. God's lordship is his Godhead; and our recognition of that engenders true humanity, human salvation. For that reason God's lordship, as Jesus understood it, expresses the relationship between God and man, in the sense that 'we are each other's happiness'. Ultimately it is the ancient covenant of love, fellowship with God, in which God nevertheless remains the sovereign partner. So in dealing with Jesus we are confronted with Jesus' God. Jesus' sole concern is that this God is a 'God of men'. The letter to Titus sums it up beautifully: 'There has appeared goodness and the God mindful of humanity' (Tit. 3:4). Jesus presents God as salvation for mankind. His God is a God who looks after people. Thus God's lordship, by which Jesus lived and which he proclaimed, tells us something about God in relation to man and about man in relation to God. It is a theological and yet also an anthropological reality grounded in experience. A reality indeed, because for Jesus God's lordship was not just an idea or doctrine, but primarily a lived reality. His very life was decisively shaped by his expectation of God's kingdom in surrender to God's lordship. Jesus was gripped by that lordship, enthralled by it, so that his whole
[143] life was on the one hand a 'celebration' of that lordship and on the other a model of orthopraxis in accordance with the kingdom of God. For that he lived and for that he died: God's cause as the cause of mankind.

At first glance Jesus took up an old story. Indeed he did − but he gave it a new, surprising turn. If we disregard for a moment the historical connotation of 'king' and 'rule', God's kingly lordship preached by Jesus and demonstrated in his conduct signifies God's (with the accent on *God*) *radical trustworthiness and commitment to human beings*, that is: God's faithfulness both to himself and to mankind, for whom he wills a meaningful future. Dependable saving power and, on our side, certainty of a meaningful future (despite every empirical

contrast experience) is the core of Jesus' message of the approaching kingdom of God; ultimately it is Jesus' term for what we came to call 'grace': God's sovereign graciousness.

But we must not lose sight of the critical power inherent in the age-old concepts of 'lordly rule' and 'kingdom' or 'kingship'. To Jesus God's lordship was also a judgment on history. The humanly, culturally, and socially critical power of God's reality was implicit in the concept of the *basileia* of God. Jesus' message, in contrast to John's preaching, really is a gospel: it imparts good news, it displays an aspect of God radically different from John's one-sided proclamation of God's imminent judgment. Yet for all his goodness and compassion the God of Jesus is by no means a kindly granddaddy, disposed to be lenient. Jesus' zeal for God's law as a revelation of his will is authentically Jewish and surpasses the Judaism of his time only in that his radical zeal for that unimpeachable law focuses on it as the law of *God*.

The reader will have noticed that in this context there is a sudden cessation of all references: the 'critical apparatus' dwindles to virtually nothing at the very moment when we come to the core of Jesus' message, and the most pressing issue is whether we are embarking on 'authentic Jesus' territory or not. The reason is that Jesus nowhere explains the notion of 'God's lordly rule' as such; he presupposes it as a concept familiar to his contemporaries; its concrete meaning emerges from his entire ministry, his parables and day-to-day conduct, which we shall be analysing later on and from which we have to distil everything we have been saying about the kingdom of God. The whole of Part Two, therefore, is designed to justify what has been said already by way [144] of summary. Even so, it requires more detailed exegetical explanation.

From the foregoing account the disparity with John's essential message appears so radical that one may well wonder what Jesus had been looking for when he sought out John in the first place and, in view of his baptism, had evidently found. We must inquire, therefore, whether the synoptic tradition contains passages showing that Jesus, albeit in a modified version of his own, at any rate continued John's doomsday preaching. Only then will the drift of Jesus' message of the kingdom of God become clear − more especially whether in this respect he is apocalyptic, proclaiming a 'futuristic', coming eschatology or a here-and-now eschatology concerning a decision at the present moment. This is a topical, controversial issue in contemporary Christology and eschatology. Exegetes disagree radically on the subject.

The question whether Jesus' proclamation of God's lordship was consciously anti-Zealotic and anti-apocalyptic is not relevant. It is clear from the New Testament that his conduct and ministry were never 'anti-' but 'pro-': arising from a (still to be analysed) personal experience, Jesus' message is positively oriented; and in its positive orientation to God's universal, saving love it is

only anti anything that contradicts this essential message. There was a trend in all Jewish groups in Jesus' time which directly opposed the distinctive tenor of his basic message. And on that Jesus launches a frontal attack. It serves to reveal what he meant by his favourite expression, 'kingdom of God'.

The general trend in Judaism at that time in most of its more lively centres and vocal groups was towards sectarianism, on the lines of the 'holy remnant' concept of the Daniel literature. This divided people into two classes: 'we, the children of light', whatever they might be called (in apocalyptic terms), as opposed to 'those others, children of darkness', the latter comprising not only the heathen but also every Israelite who did not belong to one's own devout or pious group.[53] The sectarian, separatist trend led to the proliferation of groups, each determined to be 'even holier' and each regarding itself as the sole legitimate heir of the true people of God. Hence their names: 'Pharisees' (*perushim;* Aramaic *perishayya*), those separate from the common people (*'ammè ha'ares*); 'Essenes' (probably from the Aramaic *chasayya*), the zealous or pious
[145] ones − a universal aspiration from the time of the Chasidic (also known in academic circles as pietistic) movements. This points to an unmistakable tendency among the laity to assume the duties of the Levitic priesthood − in other words, a certain clericalizing of lay spirituality ('God's priestly people'). The axiom in these instances was often: love whomever God loves (and chooses) and hate those he has rejected: 'to hate all the sons of darkness, each according to the measure of their iniquity, in the vengeance of God'.[54] 'Publicans and sinners' in particular were completely beyond the pale: to consort with them was to make oneself a sinner. So when we read in Mt. 5:43: 'You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy' (a text not to be found anywhere in the Old Testament), it would seem to refer to certain schools of thought current in Jesus' own time. Furthermore, the Qumrân Damascus document says that the enfeebled, the lame, blind and deaf cannot join the Essene group; they are excluded from the eschatological 'community of the blessed'. By contrast, in the parable of the banquet Jesus makes a deliberate point of admitting to the feast the crippled and the lame, all who are discriminated against (Lk. 14:1). All the most active centres of Judaism at that time were characterized by this ambition to be the 'holy remnant', the pure community of God. So when Jesus calls Israel 'sheep without a shepherd' (Mt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34) he is announcing the bankruptcy of all who are set on gathering together a pure community of God through separation and selection

[53] The tendency, current throughout Judaism at the time, to form sectarian remnants has been examined in particular by A. Vögtle, *Das öffentliche Wirken Jesu auf den Hintergrund der Qumrânbewegung,* l.c., 5-19; J. Jeremias, 'Der Gedanke des "Heiligen Restes" im Spätjudentum und in der Verkündigung Jesu', in *Abba* (Göttingen 1966), 121-131; see on the distinctive character of these groups: E. Lohse, *Umwelt des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen 1971), 51-85.

[54] Thus in Qumrân:1QS 1:4 and 1:10.

and leaving the mass of people to their fate. Instead of secluding himself Jesus travels throughout the country, bringing good news to all without exception: he goes looking for the single lost sheep; he has not come to help the healthy (those who think they are 'righteous') but the sick (Mk. 2:17) − and they are all sick. Thus he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners to bring them proof of God's love for them. What we have here cannot be anything other than a message and praxis that proclaim God's universal love, God's true lordship, with no 'remnants'. Equally, Jesus repudiates the apocalyptic reversal of power structures, in other words, the poor becoming the boss and those who are now rich becoming the oppressed. Jesus sees the kingdom as the abrogation of all abusive power structures, every repressive domination of one human being over another: it is a kingdom of mutual service (Mk. 10:42-45). We are even warned against 'lording it over things', that is, possessing riches (Mk. 10:23). Most striking and characteristic of Jesus' orientation to the future as 'God's potential**ity**', hence crucial to his understanding of God's lordship, is [146] his utter indifference to a person's sinful past. When the point is raised (as in the case of the adulterous woman) Jesus displays extreme reserve. He condemns no one; his concern is with the potential for the future in the 'now' of the *metanoia.* Such an attitude obviates all frantic searching for self-identity. The parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32) is a particularly good portrayal of Jesus' attitude and his message of God's concern for people in trouble, as well as an indictment of those who feel they are righteous and insist on their due reward. Another typical feature is that all the *ekklesia* passages in the New Testament are secondary − which means they do not derive from Jesus: *qahal,* synagogue and *ekklesia,* in that period at any rate, were typical names appropriated by separatist movements dissociating themselves from 'the sinful people'. Jesus desires the salvation of Israel's twelve tribes, that is, of all Israel; and in his mission he restricts himself to these (Mt. 15:24; 10:5-6). But that limitation expresses a universality that erases virtually all boundaries. If there was in fact a personal rift between Jesus and John the Baptist, that must have been the reason for it. On the other hand it is quite clear that John had no wish to establish a separate remnant community; moreover, he nowhere presented the 'seal' of baptism as a guarantee of salvation against the dread day of judgment that was approaching. Even though not demonstrable, this nonetheless was thought **to** pose a *threat* to a 'holy remnant'; the baptized person returned home (what he still had to do there, and the complications for such a baptized individual, who had to await the looming day of fiery judgment, would seem to have lain beyond John's field of vision). In that case the person might well feel himself to be an individual 'holy remnant'. More serious, however, was the fact that John's whole ministry disregarded God's universal compassion; and this, after his baptism by John, Jesus appeared to

have identified as the true face of God. Hence a substantive break with the Baptist is hard to deny.

A Q logion, incorporated into Lk. 16:16=Mt. 11:12-13, may be helpful, even though it is applied in a different context: 'The law and the prophets were until John; since then [*apo tote*] the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it violently' (Lk.). 'From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and violent persons take it by force. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John' (Mt.). This is
[147] probably not an authentic saying of Jesus but a reflection by the church. The Baptist is seen as a definite caesura: the first period of the divine dispensation runs up to and includes John; Jesus' appearance ushers in a new age. In other words, up to and including John God's *basileia* was absent. The period 'since then' − *apo tote* (Lk. 16:16b) − excludes John[55] (the inclusive aspect betrays a Matthean theology): only when Jesus arrived on the scene did the *basileia* become historically present.[56] According to the Q community the Baptist's place is outside the *basileia*; he brings the old order to an end. Only after the appearance of Jesus was God's kingdom forcefully attacked,[57] but it proves itself superior; for the power of the *basileia* is discernible in Jesus' acts of exorcism and healing and especially in his peoclamation of the gospel (Lk. 7:18-23=Mt. 11:2-6; likewise in regard to the John-Jesus relationship); all this brings the old dispensation to an end. In other words, the church, in contrast to John, sees the future − as God's potential − bound up not with John's baptism but with the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian community may well have seen a more radical discontinuity than Jesus himself was aware of. The divergence between John's inclusive (Matthew) and exclusive significance (Luke and Q source) for the kingdom of God reveals the uncertainty of the local Christian congregations on this score. Remarkable, too, is the fact that the Q community does describe the Baptist as 'forerunner', not of the earthly Jesus but of the coming, eschatological Jesus the son of man.[58] One observes an increasingly pronounced subordination of John to Jesus in the earliest Christian traditions. Moreover, as noted earlier in regard to the question of Jesus' authority, Mark reflects an early, pre-Markan Jesus tradition, in which

[55] Thus E. Käsemann, *Besinnungen,* II, 210, who at every point sticks to an inclusive interpretation. How this is possible if John himself is unfamiliar with any proclamation of the kingdom of God remains unexplained.

[56] J. Becker, *Joh. der Täufer,* l.c., 87-88.

[57] Attempts to read ideas of a Zealotic state into this have proved abortive. See sub *biadzesthai,* in ThWNT I, 608-13; this verb is always associated with the *enemies* of God's kingdom. Also Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 265, n. 622. Not Luke but the Matthean text is primary here: 'the kingdom ... has suffered violence'. The battle against God's *basileia,* and thus against the Christian messengers, begins with the activities of Jesus of Nazareth, in whom this kingdom has come. The parables about the growth of God's kingdom show that nothing can impede that growth.

[58] P. Hoffmann, 'Die Anfänge der Theologie in Logienquelle', in *Gestalt und Anspruch des Neuen Testaments,* 142; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 196.

Jesus responds with a reference to John's prophetic commission: just as Jesus sees John's baptism as the work of God, he regards his own ministry, being a continuation of John's, as God's work, although of a different hue: he is conscious of being God's fully authorized emissary. Jesus takes up John's call to *metanoia* (Mk. 1:14-15 and parallels) and his ministry is likewise aimed at the renewal of God's people. They both think exclusively in terms of God's future, but the substance they ascribe to it differs in character and essence. But Jesus does not have the same problem as the church of having to decide whether he or John is 'the greater'. For someone totally absorbed in going about God's business a conundrum of that kind is simply not relevant (to himself): seek first the kingdom of God, then everything else will fall into place. Jesus' preaching of God's lordship as focused on mankind, that is, coinciding completely with [148] the cause of human beings, did not pertain directly to himself as a kind of second subject of his message. In other words, it was not himself that he preached − though it must be conceded, of course, that everyone telling a story inevitably reveals himself, his own identity. John, though not the subject of his own proclamation, associated *metanoia* as a possible means of averting God's annihilating judgment with his own form of baptism; without proclaiming himself, that shows a distinctively prophetic self-understanding.

Along with John's message of judgment, Jesus evidently takes up John's expectation that the son of man is to come (in judgment) very soon. But it stands to reason that (to understand who Jesus was) we have to examine his logia concerning judgment and what (in all historical probability) he had to say about the son of man coming as judge in correlation with, yet distinct from, his message of the approaching kingdom of God.[59] This requirement is immediately obvious from the fact that the judgment of which Jesus speaks is consistently seen as lying in the future, as the final, eschatological judgment. In the synoptic tradition (as opposed to the Baptist and the later Johannine gospel) it is never envisaged as something happening now or just about to happen − whereas the relationship of the 'present' and 'future' to the coming kingdom of God is quite different and not to be settled either with a 'not right away but later on' or with an 'already here and now'. This relationship calls for much finer distinctions and in any case is very different from John's *Naherwartung* or qualification of the temporal dimension of God's coming judgment. Here Jesus' unique character as distinct from John's is manifestly revealed. Whilst remaining true to John's message of judgment, Jesus, in view of his own central message of God's kingdom, stripped it of any possible apocalyptic background and emphasis on the nearness of the end-time. In such a context Jesus' authentic sayings about the proximity of God's kingdom not

[59] Of the many studies of John the most convincing is the account given by J. Becker, *Joh. der Täufer,* 76.

only entail substituting Jesus' notion of 'kingdom of God' for John's idea of 'judgment' (in fact, there is no 'substitution': Jesus also proclaimed a judgment), but imply a totally new message: an *euaggelion,* a term foreign to John. This thumbnail sketch is important to determine whether Jesus was an apocalypticist or was nothing of the kind; and, finally, whether his essentially non-apocalyptic message nonetheless went hand in hand with what many at
[149] the time assumed was the imminent end of the world − which in the event did not materialize. According to J. Blank John associated the expectation of an imminent end with the idea of judgment and so with the call to conversion, realized in the baptism of repentance, whereas Jesus associated the same *Naherwartung* with the idea of God's lordship or rule and plainly understands it as universal salvation, inclusive of life, happiness and joy for human beings.[60] The question is whether this conception is sufficiently differentiated: in particular, whether the anticipated nearness of the end − a historically reconstructable, authentic feature of Jesus' teaching − has been made clear enough.

As a matter of fact, the concept of 'God's lordship' and 'the kingdom of God' was less focal in late Judaism than has often been thought.[61] References to the anticipated future under the theme of God's kingdom are remarkably rare in apocalyptic literature.[62] Neither does it feature prominently in the Qumrân writings. Apocalypticism is more concerned with the end-time transformation or total change from the old to the new aeon than with what is to follow it. In the later rabbinic material (which preserves older traditions in written form) the concept crops up regularly, but as an abstract *theologoumenon* in two standard expressions: 'to take upon one the yoke of the kingdom of God', that is declare one's allegiance to the one true God, and 'the kingdom of God will be revealed', specifically at the end of the age. The rabbis (and Pharisees) focused their lively expectation of the end not so much on the coming of God's kingdom (lordship) as on that of the messiah.[63] They prefer to speak of the *olam ha-ba,*[64] the aeon to come, rather than of the kingdom of God.

There are no texts known to us which suggest that Jesus ever mentioned the 'aeon to come'.[65] The notion of the age to come, with either its transforming

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[60] *Jesus von Nazareth,* 104.

[61] See G. Klein, ' "Reich Gottes" als biblischer Zentralbegriff', in EvTh 30 (1970), 642-670; A. Vögtle, *Das Neue Testament,* 144.

[62] Dan. 2:44 (4:31 and 6:27 are not eschatological); Oracula Sibyllina 3:767; Assumptio Moysis 10:1ff.

[63] Vögtle, *Das Neue Testament,* 144.

[64] Strack-Bülerbeck, I, 252, 477, 829.

[65] Mt. 12:32; here 'nor in the age (aeon) to come' means simply 'never' (see Mk. 3:29). 'Sons of this world' (Lk. 16:8; 20:34) does indeed sound apocalyptic and Qumrânic, but means in an ordinary Jewish context 'we earthly people'. There is, of course, Mk. 10:29-30: 'now in this time *(kairos)*... and in the age (aeon) to come'; setting aside the (at least) dubious authenticity, where Jesus is concerned, of this saying, what we have here is not any teaching about the future but a paraenesis,

renewal of the world or, after the world has been annihilated, its radically new creation, is utterly foreign to him. He talks about the coming kingdom of God: God is Lord; he will make this plain to all and is already doing so. To argue that this implies a complete breakdown of the apocalyptic scheme of things seems to me irrelevant, indeed fallacious.[66] Although the apocalyptic scheme of the two aeons is concerned solely with the engrossing event which will visibly transform the old world into a new one, this does not entail, even in that context, a dualistic disjunction. Even there the aeon to come or the kingdom of God is already operative, albeit in a hidden way.[67] Apocalypticism it is not intent on the here and now as opposed to a hereafter, but on the old [150] world, in which the divine, celestial process operates invisibly, and the new world aeon in which this celestial history will be publicly manifested on this earth. Of course, this public enactment implies an unprecedented, radical renewal of everything; but no consideration is given to the element of continuity. Especially in Qumrân, eschaton and 'end of the age' did not imply what we moderns understand by eschatology. **A** definitive 'kingdom of God' and an 'end of the age' are not the same thing. What in many apocalyptic circles is called the end of the age (or 'last days') we could better describe as pre-eschatological. The 'time of salvation' at the close of the age signifies a glorious, peaceful period 'without end', that is, to which no end is expected. Albeit in an apocalyptic framework, ideas which are simply Jewish, current in both apocalyptic and non-apocalyptic circles,[68] play a role in all this. Although Jesus was no apocalypticist, we should not see him as an opponent of it, someone who consciously repudiated apocalypticism. Jesus rejected and opposed only what contravened God's cause and obedience to God's will; everything else he let be − even paying tax to the Roman occupying power. None of that directly concerned him; his whole purpose in life was different.

Insofar as God's kingdom was already effective it was discernible only in faith.[69] Jesus' deliberate focus on the future entailed no doctrine about the future, only that it would be very different from the present without further specification. On the one hand the kingdom of God is an eschatological event, still to come (Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:15-18): the eschatological feast lies in the future; Jesus will participate in it, with his disciples. On the other hand it suggests that

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an exhortation to forsake everything. At issue here is the eschatological relevance of the present. The hundredfold 'compensation' is something that belongs to Hellenistic Judaism; see Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 404-417.

[66] Thus e.g. R. Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft,* 249-262; A. Vögtle, *Das Neue Testament,* 145-148; J. Becker, *Das Heil Gottes, Heils- und Sündenbegriff in den Qumrântexten und in Neuen Testament* (SUNT, 3) (Göttingen 1964), 206.

[67] Dan. 3:35; 4 Ezra 5:26ff; Rev. 1:9.

[68] See e.g. Fr. Muszner, ' "In den letzten tagen' (Apg. 2,17a)', in BZ 5 (1961) 263-265; we already find this in Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Mic. 4:1; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; Dan. 10:14.

[69] H. Riesenfeld, sub *paratèrèsis,* in ThWNT VIII, 150.

the fellowship at table enjoyed by Jesus and his disciples during his days on earth is a present reality to be consummated in the kingdom of God. But we are told no more about the nature and manner of that eschatological reunion: would it happen prior to the death of the disciples? Later on? In what fashion? Jesus said nothing about that. As A. Vögtle rightly observes, the Jesus tradition affords no ground for saying anything about whether and how God's kingdom will come in the existing world, the cosmos.[70] All that matters to Jesus is people in their relationship to God, and God in his care and concern for people. What he preaches about the coming kingdom of God pertains to God's dealings with human beings, his saving actions focused on the future.

So the theme of the kingdom of God was not a lively issue either in apocalypticism or among the Pharisees and rabbis. The one movement in
[151] which it flourished was that of the Jewish resistance, the Sicarii, as well as among the Zealots. For the sake of the kingdom of God they demanded political liberty and the overthrow of the Roman occupation: God alone was king of Israel. Their militant resistance was meant to hasten his kingdom. Here indeed we find the notion of the speedy approach of God's kingdom. Yet remarkably the theme of the approaching kingdom was particularly vital in the Q community, which (whether or not in express opposition to the nationalistic politics of the Zealots) had an explicitly non-violent conception of the approaching kingdom of God.[71] The association of 'approaching kingdom' with 'orthopraxis' (concretely: observance of the Law) was typical of the Q community, its local community programme as it were (Lk. 6:20-45 and parallels; also Lk. 6:46-49 and parallels).[72] This community (in its Judaeo-Hellenistic phase) was already interpreting the activity of the earthly Jesus as a development preceding the end. In Mt. 11:10 (a Q interpretation of the earlier saying in 10:7-9) John the Baptist is the envoy promised in Mal. 3:1, who prepares the way for 'the one who is to come'. But one notices that in the Q community's account of the commission of the disciples by the earthly Jesus they are given as the substance of their message 'the kingdom of God has come upon you' (Lk. 10:9=Mt. 10:7), in other words, exactly what had already been formulated as the content of Jesus' own message. Although the Q community

[70] A. Vögtle, *Das Neue Testament,* l.c., 150. Only Mt. 19:28 has the obviously eschatological-cum-futuristic '*paliggenesia*', as well as the '*sunteleia tou aiônos*' (Mt. 13:39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20), the end (or the final re-creation) of this aeon; in the New Testament this is typically Matthean; it would appear to be an apocalyptic term from the Septuagint version of Daniel (12:13b; 9:27; see Heb. 9:26). Vögtle, ibid., 151-166. Without doubt Mk. 9:1 in particular (some of Jesus' contemporaries will still be alive when the God's reign is established in power) is secondary. See C. Colpe, sub *huios tou anthrôpou,* in ThWNT VIII, 459; Berger, *Amen-Worte,* 62-70.

[71] K. Schubert, 'Die Entwicklung der eschatologischen Naherwartung im Frühjudentum', in *Vom Messias zu Christus* (ed. K. Schubert) (Vienna-Freiburg 1964), 1-54; P. Hoffmann, 'Die Anfänge', l.c., 134-152; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten,* 385-386.

[72] H. Schürmann, 'Die Warnung des Lk. vor der Falschlehre in der "Predigt am Berge"', in BZ 10 (1966), 59-81.

gave this message a distinctive slant after the Easter events, what they appear to have passed on was substantially Jesus' own message of God's approaching kingdom. The peculiar character of this community, especially the focus of its distinctive tradition,[73] guarantees that the message of the 'kingdom of God is at hand' really was that of Jesus − even though it is not clear whether the (apocalyptic) expectation of judgment, so characteristic of the Q community,[74] was equally fundamental in Jesus' preaching.[75] Thus the continuity between Jesus' preaching and that of the Q community lies primarily in the eschatology, not in the kerygma: both proclaim the approaching arrival of God's kingdom and the coming of the son of man, although even the earliest stratum in the Q community identified the still to come son of man with the heavenly Jesus, who is to appear at the end of the age to save his own and to judge the world.[76] In the earliest phase of the Q tradition, then, Jesus was not the one proclaimed; the import of its message was the coming kingdom of God and the coming judgment, in which Jesus as the son of man will rescue his church,[77] as Paul intimates in his earliest letter: '[We] wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come' (I Thess. 1:10). [152]

That Jesus prophesied the imminent arrival of God's kingdom is beyond dispute. Was he mistaken? Did he, like the apocalypticists, have in mind the approaching end of the world? It is difficult to trace Jesus' own vision of the future in the New Testament interpretations, coloured as they are by the expectations of the early Christians. After all, belief in his resurrection or at any rate his 'being with God' (see below) was initially felt to signal the start of the parousia, the 'end of the world'. The fervent expectation of Jesus' coming in glory was based on his being alive with God; subsequently, when Jesus'

[73] See Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 212ff; also Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* 96.
[74] The main thesis of Lührmann's *Q-Redaktion*; see especially 94.
[75] The commentators disagree totally on this point. See the state of the discussion (at any rate up to 1964) as presented by W.G. Kümmel, 'Die Naherwartung in der Verkündigung Jesu', in *Zeit und Geschichte* (Dankesgabe an R. Bultmann) (Tübingen 1964), 31-46. Since 1964, see in particular: R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen. Tradition und Redaktion in Mk. 13* (Düsseldorf 1968; with a variety of literature); J. Bornkamm, 'Die Verzögerung der Parusie', in *Geschichte und Glaube* (Gesamelte Aufsätze – Collected Essays, III-1) (Munich 1968), 46-55; E. Gräszer, *Die Naherwartung Jesu* (Stuttgart 1973).The question at issue is whether, as far as Jesus is concerned, early Christianity exhibits 're-apocalypticizing' tendencies – which for instance Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* 94, simply takes to be a fact. This presupposes, of course, that proclamation of the final judgment or of coming salvation is 'in essence' apocalyptic. In this enquiry everything depends on how we define the essential character of 'apocalyptic'. Furthermore, the exegetes don't sufficiently take into account the 'sociology of expectation of the end'. And then, it seems to me, there is such a thing as a prophetic expectation of the end, which is indeed *represented* in temporal terms of 'nearness', and is even intended in that sense, without entitling us to give this expectation of 'it's-on-the-point-of-happening-now' a precise chronological interpretation. Both an overly complicated anthropology *and* a religious impulse come into play here.
[76] Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* 97; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 165-175; U. Wilckens, *Jesus-überlieferung,* 336-367.
[77] See Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* 97.

coming was 'delayed', it made no essential difference, although at first it did pose problems for a lot of Christians, as appears from the New Testament. But these Christian expectations of the end cannot be traced back directly to Jesus' preaching. As noted already, Jesus preached in the assured conviction that God's kingdom was at hand; and he saw its nearness *in* his own ministry (see below); but nowhere in the texts does he identify its coming with the end of the world. He confidently proclaimed the speedy coming of God's salvation, and acted accordingly; we are told nothing about his conception of *how* that salvation would come. Speculations about that – on the lines of expectations of a speedy end of the world or, more precisely, of a soon to arrive son of man − are certainly tempting, in my view not even foolish, considering the spirit of the time; but we have no solid historical ground for stating this with any cogency. Jesus' firm belief in salvation, as we shall see, has a purely religious foundation. Besides, it must be acknowledged that over time the nearing prospect of his death likewise influenced Jesus' notions (or lack thereof) regarding the 'how' of the certain salvation to come; assured of salvation, he left it to God. It will be seen in due course that even when it comes to Jesus' own ideas (if any) about how the kingdom of God would come, God remains sovereignly free.

It is plain from Jesus' life that 'present' and 'future', although distinct, are essentially linked; Jesus proclaimed salvation to come, at the same time making it present by his conduct, which at once suggests a connection between his person and the coming lordship of God. The nature of this connection will gradually emerge from the analyses which follow. What is emerging already is this: Jesus makes a connection between the coming of God's kingdom and
[153] *metanoia,* that is, the actual praxis of the kingdom of God. The Lord's Prayer suggests a fundamental connection between 'your kingdom come' and 'your will be done on earth': carrying out God's will in our earthly history has to do with the coming of his kingdom, always in the dialectics, so typical of Jesus, between present and future; while the future is always greater than the present, it stimulates us to conduct ourselves ethically in accordance with God's kingdom even now. This connection between God's lordship and orthopraxis clearly derives from Jesus: in his 'going about doing good', in his siding with the dispossessed and outcasts, expressed mainly in his parables and his association with sinners (see below). The way Jesus lived gave the kingdom of God a face, through his practical concern with human wellbeing and wholeness, also physically − healings and exorcisms. Where he appeared fear departed, fear of life as well as fear of death; he set people free and restored them to themselves. In particular he saw attachment to wealth and property, whether small or great and excessive, as directly opposed to self-surrender to God's kingdom. It imperils the very essence of God's lordship:

God's unconditional trustworthiness (even if his ways are not our ways), expressed in the outpouring of salvation from God. Orthopraxis is the human manifestation or consistent translation of God's universal saving love into the register of human living. It is manifested where love knows no boundaries, no compartmentalizing and sectarian divisions, extending even to enemies, to 'publicans and sinners', that is, all in the Jewish society of the time who were barred from Jewish − Pharisee and Essene – table fellowship. Jesus sees such conduct – and above all his own − as signalling the coming of God's kingdom. In Jesus, therefore, God's kingdom finds a human mediator. Human concern for fellow humans is the visible form and manifestation of the coming of God's kingdom; it is the way of God's lordship. Jesus' conduct of his own life presents not a theoretical but a practical, proleptic realization, an anticipation of the 'new earth', the new praxis of humane, good, authentic living that we are looking for[78] – albeit in perfectly concrete historical contingency which, as such, cannot be repeated. Hence the sought after, totally other, better world − the kingdom of God, his humane loving power or dominion − is not vague and undefined: it acquired a historical likeness in the life and conduct of Jesus, [154] which for those who trust in him is not only an inspiration and motive force but also, because of its unique content, beyond mere pragmatism, decisively orients their actions in the world. The effect of all this is to turn the apocalyptic connection between eschatological hope and an imminent reign of peace into an intrinsic bond uniting eschatological hope with a new praxis in this world, without abandoning the idea of imminent salvation.

At any rate, to Jesus conversion prompted by grace as the historically visible manifestation of the coming of God's kingdom does not have the apocalyptic (messianic) significance of a new aeon dawning as a result of sudden divine intervention; it entails both a new mentality and a new way of behaving, based on faith in the approaching kingdom of God. In its fullness, therefore, Jesus' message of God's lordship and his kingdom is: God's universal love for mankind attested in and through his corresponding conduct, hence an appeal to us to believe in and hope for this coming salvation and kingdom of peace 'imparted by God', and faithfully to manifest its coming in consistent praxis of that kingdom. This will become evident in the analyses that follow.

B. THE PRAXIS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD: JESUS' PARABLES

Literature. E. Auerbach, *Mimesis, Dargestelite Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Berne 1959[2]); J. Blank, 'Marginalien zur Gleichnisauslegung', *Schriftauslegung in Theorie und Praxis* (Munich 1969), 89-103; E. Biser, *Die*

[78] R. Pesch, *Von der 'Praxis des Himmels'. Kritische Elemente im Neuen Testament* (Grasz 1971).

Gleichnisse Jesu (Munich 1965); C. H. Dodd, *The parables of the kingdom (*London 1935, 1961[2]); E. Eichholz, *Einführung in die Gleichnisse* (Neukirchen 1963); F. Fiebig, *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Tübingen, Leipzig 1904); *Die Gleichnisse Jesu im Lichte der rabbinischen Gleichnisse des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters* (Tübingen 1912); E. Güttgemanns, *Die linguistisch-didaktische Methodik der Gleichnisse Jesu* (Studia Linguistica Neotestamentica) (Munich 1971), 99-183; R. W. Funk, *Language, hermeneutic, and word of God* (New York, London 1966), 124-223; J. Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu,* Götüngen 1926[6]; A. Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu,* Darmstadt 1963[2]; W. G. Kümmel, 'Noch einmal; die Gleichnis von der Selbstwachsenden Saat', *Orientierung an Jesus* (Freiburg 1973), 220-237; E. Linnemann, *Gleichnisse Jesu* (Göttingen 1969[5]); E. Lohse, 'Die
[155] Gottesherrschaft in den Gleichnissen Jesu', EvTh 18 (1958), 145-157; N. Perrin, 'The modern interpretation of the parables of Jesus and the problem of hermeneutics', *Interpretation* 25 (1971), 131-148; Et. Trocmé, *Jèsus de Nazareth vu par les témoins de sa vie* (Neuchâtel 1971), ch. 6. 'Le Jésus des parables', 94-110; D.O. Via, *The parables* (Philadelphia 1967); A. Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse der synoptischen Evangelien,* Munich 1971; theme-issue 'Gleichnisse', EvTh 32(1972), 413-451.

(a) Speaking in parables

For us modern people, familiar with the rigour of the historical sciences, it is difficult to understand a 'narrative' culture; in such cultures life's deepest mysteries are rendered in stories and parables. An illustration of this incomprehension is the common reaction to the story of Jonah's three day sojourn in the belly of a whale. Even the early church fathers found it problematic, but in our day the lack of comprehension assumes ludicrous proportions. After lengthy systematic research one scholar came to the conclusion that in point of fact Jonah, a fugitive, went to ground for three days in some sort of hiding place, a small café known as 'The Whale'. Clearly we have lost our 'narrative innocence'! After all, the tale of a man being swallowed by a large fish is told in many cultures. It serves to express all kinds of profound truths about life. Jonah's prayer (Jon. 2:2-10) indicates why this folktale − familiar in many cultures − was included in the Old Testament: God never abandons his own, however hopeless their situation may be. That is the purport of Jonah's prayer in the belly of the whale, surrounded by the all-engulfing primeval waters − a crazy situation of utter helplessness and despair. Such a story can be repeated ad infinitum. It puts in a nutshell the accumulated wisdom of peoples who well knew the savage power of water. But when the Old Testament takes over this age-old story a totally desperate situation is placed in the context of Jonah's very pointed prayer. Thus a new story is born: a story of unconditional trust in Yahweh's helping nearness

when one is at one's wits' end. The story has been told again and again, but each time it is entirely new: Christians cite the Old Testament Jonah story in a completely different context, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Such a story is never ending. It is continually retold: the core remains but is [156] reinterpreted anew.

The New Testament, too − the story of Jesus − is set in a narrative culture, which, unlike ours, has not replaced narrative innocence with scientific history. We cannot ignore either of the two approaches. For modern people stories − including the story of Jesus − are only heard properly once we attain a second primitive state, a second narrative innocence, that is, when we have passed through scientific historical inquiry and criticism and returned to a narrative innocence, which then regains its critical power over scholarship and criticism.

Conscious of the narrative culture of antiquity, we start by addressing the following question to the gospel texts: what are these gospels really trying to tell us when they report, for instance, the miracles of Jesus? Only then can we inquire into the historical core of these stories. While the historical question is not unimportant, it is part of a bigger whole.

Jesus *is* a parable, and he *tells* parables. Only parables can 'interpret' a parable. Why?

The telling of a parable, the actual events, are marvellous. Usually it conveys a paradox, a shock effect. Occasionally this is the result of the Western inability to understand what is commonplace in the East. The parable of the sower features a farmer who is obviously quite careless: he scatters his seed indiscriminately, not just on the field but also on rocky ground, among thorns, even on pathways. In the East this is quite understandable, nothing shocking about it. What I am talking about is a deliberate shock effect. Those who worked for only one hour get the same pay as those who had toiled the whole day; this shocks not only our social feelings but those of the bystanders who heard the parable at the time. To us the five so-called foolish bridesmaids are appealing, whereas the other five, the 'wise ones' who refuse to help them, are immediately branded 'rotters' by present-day youths − as they were in those days! The fact is, a parable revolves around a core of 'outrage', at any rate of paradox and unconventionality. Parables often stand things on their head; they are meant to break through our conventional lives and ideas, to set the listener thinking through a built-in element of surprise and incongruity in a common, everyday event. It is not every night that one gets hauled out of bed to rescue a stranger in dire straits; it is not every day that you lose a sheep or a coin. To a [157] good many of us it never happens at all. Yet the parable confronts me with it here and now. It forces me to keep thinking about it. Parables are 'teasers'. The familiar event is set against an unfamiliar background, and in that way a

commonplace becomes a provocative challenge. It gives us a jolt.

The aim is to make you view your life, your routine activities, your familiar world from a different angle. Parables open up new and different existential possibilities, often in contrast with our conventional ways; they offer an opportunity to experience the world differently. Parables have a powerful practical and critical impact that triggers existential and social renewal. Although involving familiar things and everyday incidents, by introducing an outrageous, paradoxical or surprise element they cut right across our spontaneous reactions and behaviour. The Good Samaritan is not just helpful; he does apparently crazy things: he continues on foot, letting the wounded man ride his animal; he brings him to an inn, returns the next day, pays for the board and lodging and puts any further expenses that may be incurred on his own bill (Lk. 10:33-35). An extra touch is the addition, in retelling the story, that the compassionate fellow is also a Samaritan, whereas the two clerics (Levite and priest) pass heedlessly by. In the everyday character of the parable there is an element of existential earnestness. Its concretely human earthiness directs a deeper appeal. Parables do not refer to some supernatural world beyond but to a new possibility in this world: that of viewing and experiencing life and the world in an unaccustomed way. By conventional standards the kind-hearted Samaritan goes overboard somewhat. But that is precisely the narrator's point – the astonishing, 'surplus' compassion of the 'good shepherd'.[79] The story puts the new world it discloses in perspective as a concrete possibility, also for present-day listeners. In the world of Jesus' parables, living and evaluating are not what they are in the humdrum world of the daily round. With three exceptions (the rich fool; Dives and Lazarus; the Pharisee and the publican) all the parables are down to earth. God does not come into it directly; yet anyone who listens to them knows that these stories confront him with God's saving activity in Jesus; this is how God acts, and it is to be seen in the actions of Jesus − at any rate, if your heart is ready for transformation.

[158] The parable remains 'suspended', therefore, so long as the listener has not decided for or against the new existential possibilities that it opens up − and ultimately for or against Jesus of Nazareth. Shall he, the listener, enter that new world? He is faced with a choice between two models. Is he to accept the new logic of grace and compassion which the parables disclose and experience that radical change in his own life? Or shall he set aside the challenge and return to the life of every day? In the end the parables are about Jesus and his world, which open up a new world in which only grace and love can dwell, and

[79] In Hebrew *re'*, fellow being, sounds more or less the same as *ro'*, shepherd; so that this parable may perhaps be a story about the good shepherd, becoming an embarrassing example of what is elsewhere described as a 'flock without shepherds'.

which places under judgment and seeks to change our history of human suffering, the outcome of our short-sighted behaviour. Remarkably, therefore, the time factor in a parable has a-chronic significance. Not that the story becomes a-temporal or supra-temporal − on the contrary, what is being narrated always includes a constitutive link with my present here and now; the relationship to my present reality is fundamental to telling and listening to a parable. There are no problems of translation or reinterpretation: I myself, here and at this moment, must come to terms with the parable, must answer the question whether I will acknowledge this new existential possibility as mine. Thus a parable needs no reasoned commentary, no explanation 'from elsewhere', no interpretation. It interprets itself, that is to say, our life, our existence and our actions. What clarifies the meaning of a parable is not argument but, if anything, the telling of a second or third parable − through the recurrent paradoxical effects of shock and 'estrangement' from our normal, everyday, conformist behaviour.

(b) The parables of Jesus

Jesus himself − his person, his stories and his actions − is a parable Therefore the shock effect marks the ongoing sequence of his life. The Markan gospel clearly reflects this. It brings together (between 2:1 and 3:5) five scandalous stories, isolated actions of Jesus that oblige the listeners to adopt a stance; the healing of a paralysed man (whose sin he forgives) (2:1-12) − a meal that Jesus shares with tax-collectors, people who gathered taxes and revenues for the Romans (2:13-17) − Jesus' defence of his disciples for not fasting while Jesus is with them (2:18-22) − his justification of his disciples' behaviour when they deliberately pluck ears of corn on the sabbath day (2:23-28) – and, as a final climax, how Jesus himself heals the withered hand of a despairing man on the [159] sabbath (3:1-5). The leaders' reaction follows at once: 'The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him' (3:6; see also the context of Mt. 12:14 and Jn. 5:18). Many fail to understand the story which Jesus is in his own person and which will be understood as such by those who are ready to accept God's supportive nearness in Jesus' praxis (Mt. 13:11). Yet the parable is so provocative that it is impossible to remain neutral. Unless one is open to the potential message of the story one sees only Jesus' incomprehensible conduct (Mk. 4:11-12), scandalous because deviating from the Law (Mk. 6:2-3; see Mt. 11:6; 15:9). One has to take sides; because the story not only opens up the possibility of a new and different life, but subjects one's own cherished attitude to life to crushing criticism. Out of self-preservation, therefore, some have rejected Jesus' parables; they considered them apocryphal and heterodox, a threat to their fixed habits. Jesus' eventual execution on the cross is a natural result of this

bafflement in the face of the living parable of God.

In the care he shows for man and human suffering, for publicans and sinners, for the poor, the crippled and the blind, for the oppressed and for people alienated from themselves by 'evil spirits', Jesus is a living parable of God: that is how God cares for man. The story of Jesus is the story of God. God himself opens up a new world in the story that is the life of Jesus, a different experience of reality and a way of living: thus the New Testament story *about* Jesus is the first Christians' response to the story *of* Jesus himself. That is why all the stories of Jesus' life live again in the life and the story of the Christian community. Thus the church becomes a narrative, existential community of people who have opened themselves up to the critical power of the parable that is Jesus' life; so, too, we may still listen to that story today. And it is up to us to decide whether we dare stake our life upon it.

That the four gospels relate more parables than Jesus ever uttered is not the real problem. For instance, more than half the parables we find in Luke are found only there − though he must have found them in some tradition. Besides, the New Testament parables have been through a process of transmission in which they acquired actualized forms, especially when the delay of the parousia became problematic. Again, about half the parables in Matthew are not to be found elsewhere in the New Testament. Mark on the other hand − an older gospel tradition − has only a few parables. The
[160] explanation seems to be not so much Mark's ignorance of a larger parable tradition as his lack of interest in the genre; Mark is more concerned with Jesus' ministry, his instruction of his disciples and praxis than with his parables. These did not strike him as directed to the members of the Christian community. E. Trocmé has shown with some plausibility that the parables form part of the 'table talk' Jesus had with various kinds of people rather than of his general preaching − an interpretation that might also account for the fairly late incorporation of the parables into the Jesus tradition of the gospels,[80] and for the fairly fluid form in which they were handed down. A lot of gospel parables, insofar as they are authentic, are more likely based on something like Jesus' *Tischreden,* his table talk; which would also explain why they tend to be about meals (of various kinds) and about 'masters' and 'servants'. The parables do not − as a well-intentioned popular literary genre would have done – reflect Jesus' own preaching 'to the crowd'; on the contrary, they are his 'sophisticated' (perhaps more 'casual') way of conversing, somewhat ironically, with comparatively well-to-do people who, without actually following Jesus, evinced a certain, not necessarily religious, often even sceptical interest in him, and on the strength of that might invite him to a meal.

[80] See e.g., Lk. 10:38-42; Jn. 12:1-8; Lk. 7:36-50; 11:37-52; 14:1-6; Mk. 2:16, par.; Lk. 19:1-10; see E. Trocme, *Jésus,* 103-104.

There is a good deal to suggest that the memory of Jesus' authentic parables was initially preserved in those circles, whereas the original Jesus tradition seems to know very little about the parables. Yet eventually the 'Jesus tradition' was itself confronted with the 'extraneous' tradition of Jesus' parables, whereupon it started taking − tentatively at first – some interest in it. This could explain the remarkably complex 'parable' theory of the Markan gospel (see Mk. 4:10-12): 'for those outside, everything is in parables' (Mk. 4:11b). One does indeed get the impression that Mark was of the opinion that Jesus' disciples were more enlightened and that these parables were meant 'for outsiders' only. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Mark was trying to curb the incorporation of the parable tradition into the gospel tradition rather than to stimulate it. Thus when Mark says 'he did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything' (Mk. 4:34), this runs counter to his whole gospel, inasmuch as he includes only a few parables and is actually concerned with other matters − in particular with what he calls 'explanation' (which for Mark implies: minus what are actually called 'parables').

All the same, in those parables we perceive Jesus' solidarity both with what [161] is best in the experiential wisdom of late-sapiential Judaism in ethical and religious matters and also the underlying dynamics of the one thing that held him enthralled: God's cause as the cause of man, the lordship of God. In the broad religious field the 'God of the parables' emerges as the almighty (Lk. 12:20; 17:7-10) who, as a tough businessman, demands 'interest' from his servants (Mt. 25:14-30 and parallels); but he is also and principally merciful and generous (Lk. 18:10-14; Lk. 18:7), comforting (Lk. 16:19-31), even perplexingly magnanimous (Mt. 18:23ff; 20:1-16; Lk. 15:20-32); he gives liberal hand-outs (Mt. 25:21, 23), not as a reward for work done but gratuitously (Mt. 20:15), and is supremely patient and long-suffering (Lk. 13:6-9; Mt. 13:24-30). This is the humane lordship of Jesus' God.

Particularly the parables that reflect the core of Jesus' message about God's approaching rule were substantially reworked as a result of Jesus' death, belief in the resurrection and the Christian expectation of Jesus' parousia; but the original tenor remains discernible in this ecclesial perspective.

The approach of God's kingdom is 'like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore − for you do not know when the master of the house will come . . .' (Mk. 13:13-37).[81] We have already seen that in essence Jesus' orientation to the future has to do with

[81] See J. Dupont, *La parabole du maître qui rentre dans la nuit (Mk. 13:34-36)*, in *Mélanges Bibliques* (en hommage à R.P.B. Rigaux) (Gembloux 1970), 89-116.

the coming of God's kingdom.[82] That calls for watchfulness. In Jesus' authentic eschatological parables the theme is always the kingdom of God, God's lordship, which according to him is 'at hand'(Mk. 1:15) and already operative (Lk. 11:20), yet is 'still to come' (Mt. 6:10 and parallels; Lk. 11:3), the timing unknown (Mk. 13:32) and not to be calculated in advance (Lk. 17:20-21). The insistence on watchfulness indicates that the coming of God's kingdom will bring salvation for the watchful, even though they know they are sinners (Lk. 18:9-14) and unworthy (Mt. 8: 8-9, and parallel in Lk.), but judgment for the rest, for those who take no action (Mt. 7:24-27, and parallel in Lk.). The link between God's lordship and orthopraxis is particularly evident in the parables. The parable of the talents is a typical example (Mt. 25:14-30, parallel in Lk. 19:12-27). The talent entrusted to us is the kingdom of God, which, whilst descending on us as pure grace like the discovery of a treasure (Mt. 13:44) or a priceless pearl (Mt. 13:45-46), is nonetheless an event demanding radical conversion, *metanoia,* to which end one must sell everything (Mt 13:44). The
[162] idea of being active now, intent on the coming of God's kingdom, is also found in the story of the five wise and five foolish virgins (Mt. 25:1-13; cf. 12:35-40), in the context of the thief (Lk. 12:30-40 and parallel) and the settling of accounts (Lk. 16:1-2; 12:42-48; Mt. 18:23; Lk. 7:41-43). They may be mostly older parables, told in Israel about the judgment to come. But as told by Jesus − who himself raises all sorts of questions through his entire ministry − and in the context of his message of God's approaching rule, they are shot through with a new profundity that calls for a disclosure response. This is primarily because the praxis of the coming kingdom can be accomplished here and now: the accustomed ways of living have to be turned topsy-turvy straightaway (*metanoia*). The parable of the talents in particular stresses that the kingdom of God is entrusted to us: the third servant is rebuked, not because he has not dared to take risks like the other two, but because he never seized even the one opportunity that was altogether risk-free, and had therefore been really remiss

[82] The object of Jesus' looking forward to a 'coming event' has to do in the synoptic gospels with: (a) the coming reign of God (Mt. 6:10, par.; Lk. 11:3; Mt. 10:7, par.; Lk. 10:9,11; – Mk. 9:1, par.; Mt. 16:28; Lk. 9:27; Mk. 1:15, par.; Mt. 4:17; – Lk. 17:20; 21:31; 22:18); – (b) the son of man (Mt. 10:32-33, par.; Lk. 12:8-9; Lk. 17:24,26,50; Mt. 24:44, par.; Lk. 12:40; – Mk. 8:38, par.; Mt. 16:27, Lk. 9:26; Mk. 13:26 par.; Mt. 24:30, Lk. 21:27; Mk. 14:62, par.; Mt. 26:64; – Mt. 10:23; 16:28; 25:31; – Lk. 18:8); – (c) the coming one (Mt. 23:39, par.; Lk. 13:35; see also Mt. 11:3, par.; Lk. 7:19; Mk. 11:9-10, par.; Mt. 21:9; Lk. 19:30); – (d) then 'the Day' or 'the days of the son of man' (Lk. 17:24,26,30 ; Mt. 10:15, par.; Lk. 10:12; – Mk. 13:30, par.; Mt. 24:36; – Mt. 25:13 – Lk. 17:22; 21:34-35; 23:29; – (e) the judgment (Mt. 11:23, par.; Lk. 10:14). – In Jesus' preaching the coming reign of God predominates over all else; the judgment is as it were the negative obverse of it or the catastrophe for whoever docs not accept the offer of eschatological salvation. A subsidiary element is the 'coming son of man' as the eschatological judge of the world, through which 'the judgment' as such becomes a theme. Thus being alert, on the watch for the coming event, I would always interpret (in the context of Jesus' own times) in this sense: be on the lookout, because the reign or kingdom of God, which may be a judgment for anyone who turns down the *metanoia,* is about to come. Earliest Christianity already interpreted many parables with the parousia of Jesus-son-of-man explicitly in view.

about what had been entrusted to him. This story could be titled more aptly the 'parable of the third servant'. God's lordship demands corresponding action. The parable of the watchful servant (reworked into a parousia parable), as well as that of the faithful and unfaithful servants (Mt. 24:45-51, parallel in Lk. 12:42-46,47-48), likewise indicates the need to watch out for the coming kingdom of God, which may entail either salvation or judgment. Jesus' preaching of judgment would seem from the original tenor of the parables to be the reverse of his proclamation of God's coming kingdom, which requires men to be actively on the alert, making the most of what is entrusted to them: watchfulness now with an eye to the coming kingdom of God and orthopraxis.

Against the background of Jewish spirituality in Jesus' day, the parable of the insignificant slave is, perhaps the most disconcerting – besides, in view of its non-Greek style, deriving from the earliest parable tradition (although occurring only in the source peculiar to Luke) (Lk. 17:7-10). Jewish spirituality in those days was based on obedience to God according to the norm of the Law. It was an objective standard, so to speak, by which to gauge concretely the prospect of either salvation or judgment. God is, after all, a righteous God of retribution, which could be measured precisely by the yardstick of faithfulness to the Law. Exact knowledge of the Law was a precondition and the basis of any reasonable hope of salvation. The *hamè ha'ares,* the common [163] people, who lacked such knowledge of the Law, were therefore at a disadvantage when it came to salvation. But anyone who knew the Law and observed it minutely was assured of salvation; for then God, because of his righteousness, owed the law-abiding ones salvation.[83] This legalistic notion, the basis of an impersonal (albeit 'hypostatized', thus intensifying the oppressive domination of the impersonal) Law between the living God and human persons as an objective yardstick permitting precise calculation, underlay the whole Judaic conception of merit and reward and assurance of salvation. It may be that, albeit by way of exception, some rabbis did condemn the calculation of salvation, but it was immanent in the system; in this sense self-denigration and law observance without an eye to reward was in some circles the subtlest way to assure the reward of actual obedience to the Law. Jesus' parable of the insignificant slave – to the benefit, in fact, of the common people − is a frontal attack on this spirituality. Taking a slave as an example of the relation between God and man was nothing scandalous but was normal in those days, particularly in view of the lenient treatment of slaves in Israel. The point at issue is the concrete status of a slave, who on the one hand is totally subject to the will of his master, the head of the household, but on the other is quite ready to render whatever service is required of him; yet, notwithstanding

[83] See W. Pesch, *Der Lohngedanke in der Lehre Jesu verglichen mit der religiösen Lohnlehre des Spätjudentum* (Munich 1955).

all this devotion, he has no right to any recompense. That is how we are before God (Lk. 17:10). The idea that the law-abiding, devout believer can lay no claim to a reward is the shock effect running throughout this parable, because it stands prevailing Judaic ideas on their head. Total readiness to serve God is taken for granted, warranting no thanks or reward. That may offend even our modern sensibility. Yet in the terms of the parable this is the supreme personalization of man. The Law is dethroned from the hypostasis which detaches it from God, an objective yardstick thrust between God and man. Man is restored to a direct, personal relationship with God; committed to a personal authority, he orients himself according to the substantive meaning of the Law as God's will rather than just a formally binding agency.[84] In a personal relationship one does not calculate or think about thanks and rewards. There is no question of reward for achievement, only of gracious clemency, which has a logic of its own with its poignant, bounteous and gratuitous reward. As a result faithful obedience to God is radicalized in virtue
[164] of its personalizing significance, but formal, juridical law observance as a basis for calculating the prospects of salvation is completely negated; the Law becomes part of a personal, non-juridical relationship and is given a personal, substantive foundation. This also explains why Jesus, who certainly did support the Law as a revelation of God's will (see below), in actual fact − when faced with materially concrete demands and circumstances − sometimes overrode its formal requirements, even that of keeping the sabbath holy, out of humane considerations.

Although this parable is peculiar to Luke, other parables state the same thing in other ways. For me the most appealing of these is what I would call the parable of 'the elder brother of the prodigal son' (Lk. 15:11-32). The father longingly awaits the return and repentance of his younger son, who is living a dissolute life on his share of the inheritance. Dire need brings him, at the end of his tether, to repentance. His father is already looking out for him. Not a word is said about what has happened; and there is a grand celebration to mark the return. This in itself is a parable of God's mercy, which is way ahead of any contrition, as other parables make clear (see immediately below): 'For this my son was dead and is alive again' (Lk. 15:24); that is sufficient reason for joyous celebration. But the point of the parable lies in what amounts to a second interwoven parable. The law-abiding older son grows jealous, even righteously indignant. He has never been offered a party like that, although he served his father loyally and was at his beck and call. This expresses the prevailing Judaic conception of reward for obedience to the Law (Lk. 15:29-30), together with an undertone of contempt for the sinner: he does not call the

[84] A Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse,* 116.

prodigal 'my brother', but distances himself: 'now that son of yours has returned' (15:30). The parable cuts across all notions of reward for performance and puts law observance in the appropriate, personal realm: 'Son, you are always with me and all that is mine is yours' (15: 31). This is followed by a perceptive rider, inverting the elder son's disdainful attitude towards his dissolute brother: 'It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive...' (15:32).

The same defiance of the legalistic notion of wages according to performance is found in the socially scandalous parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16). Here the 'social' shock effect is intentional. The praxis of the kingdom of God is different. It is not that defaulting on one's social obligations is condoned − that is not the drift of the parable. But measuring out salvation-as- [165]
reward using one's own performance as a yardstick is simply brushed aside. Here, too, the saying from the other parable applies: 'Son, you are always with me and all that is mine is yours.' Jealousy of someone else's goodness is condemned; 'Is your eye evil because I am good?' (Mt. 20:15). Not rejoicing in service 'for the sake of God's kingdom', but – translated into modern terms − demanding a greater reward for achievement (for instance, living a celibate life for the kingdom's sake) and being angry (because the younger brother, who likewise has offered his life for the cause of the kingdom, gets married) is exposed as an attitude diametrically opposed to the *praxis of the kingdom.* Whatever one's judgment of the particular case – celibacy as a claim to a higher reward or resentment of the younger brother − such attitudes are alien to the orthopraxis of the kingdom of God.

Another parable illuminating a different fundamental aspect of this spirituality of Jesus is that of the unmerciful servant (Mt. 18:23-35). The man's employer let him off a huge debt amounting to ten thousand talents − something in the region of fifty million guilders;[85] which is why Matthew makes the 'There was once a man [or a certain person]' refer to a king; the sum mentioned was virtually the yearly fiscal revenue of a Roman province at the time, which tax-gatherers had to collect and convey to the king. But not long afterwards the same servant callously demanded that a fellow servant, who owed him a paltry sum, should repay it all. Because the man could not pay at once, he had him put in prison. In its present form the parable has been reworked by the church, more specifically in a Matthean context; but our analysis makes its original tenor fairly plain. The real point is again God's lordship and *metanoia,* that is, being overcome by the glad tidings of the approaching reign of God, already graciously operative among us. The parable is in keeping with other updated recollections of Jesus' 'teaching', especially

[85] Weiser, l.c., 78.

Mt. 6:12, 14-15, parallels in Lk. 11:4 and Mk. 11:25; see Mt. 19:24-34 (if we set aside the Matthean redaction of Mt. 6:14-15 and 18:35). God's forgiveness of us precedes and must form the ground and source of any forgiveness we extend to others. The parable expresses negatively what the Lord's Prayer expresses positively. It puts the emphasis on the charitableness shown by the king; 'I forgave you all that debt ... should not you have had mercy on your fellow-servant, as I had mercy on you?' (Mt. 18:32-33). God's merciful dealing − [166] demonstrated concretely in Jesus' own compassion for people − should be the model for anyone who wishes to enter the kingdom of God. (See Mt 5:43-48 and parallel in Lk.) The link between the kingdom of God and orthopraxis − *orthôs* here means (acting) in accordance with the kingdom of God − is concretized in the final sentence as compassionate commitment to one's fellow man. For since God's lordship consists in his universal compassionate attitude towards man, the *metanoia* demanded by the kingdom takes concrete form in empathy with and dedicated commitment to one's fellow human beings – elsewhere phrased as 'Be merciful even as your Father is merciful' (Lk. 6:36, parallel in Mt. 5:48). Hence also: 'Blessed are the merciful' (Mt. 5:7). The aforementioned parable of the good Samaritan is just a variant of this praxis of compassion, peculiar to the realm of God's lordship. Thence further consequences of such praxis of the kingdom − probably early Christian insights deriving from the post-Easter experience − become apparent in all their variety: for example, before taking a gift to the altar, the church requires a man first to be reconciled with his brother (Mt. 5:23-24). Eschatological forgiveness, a gift of God's coming lordship, is to be exercised by believers, whose own lives are lived in it, towards their fellow men: that is the praxis of the kingdom of God. Love for God, demonstrated in love for man, in service (Mk. 10:44, parallel in Mt.; Lk. 22:27; Mt. 25:31-46; 7:12, parallel in Lk.; Mt. 23:11; Mk. 9:3 5 and parallel) is the sign and token in which we discern God's lordship dawning in this world and in our history. When this parable is told by Jesus, who deals mercifully with transgressors (Mt 11:19, parallel in Lk.), eats with them and so offers salvation and fellowship to publicans and sinners (Mk. 2:15-16 and parallels; Lk. 15:1-10), and promises sinners the kingdom of God (see Lk. 15:2-32; Mt 21:31) (see a later section), it becomes clear that the parable also invites us to ask: who is this Jesus who so fascinatingly exemplifies the praxis of God's kingdom in his person and ministry? How can fellowship with Jesus be an offer of salvation from God? For the story as told by Jesus suggests that he himself is this parable of God. The parable is a question left open.

The parable of the reluctant wedding guests (Mt. 22:1-10, 11-14, parallel in Lk. 14:16-24) highlights the aspect of rejection of the salvation offered by the kingdom of God. The eschatological kingdom is represented as a big banquet or wedding feast – an established traditional feature. To some extent the

Lukan, but more especially the Matthean parable has been overlaid by the [167]
situation of the church after Jesus' death. The gist of the original version would seem to be this. Somebody sends his servant to fetch the guests previously invited to the dinner that has been prepared for them; they refuse to come, offering all sorts of excuses. The host is deeply offended and gets his servant to invite the first people he happens to meet in the street to the meal, now waiting to be served. Through its paradoxical, almost unrealistic exaggeration (the hallmark of parable), a 'profane' everyday event (the few who had agreed to come to dinner but at the last moment proffered their excuses are hurriedly replaced by means of second-round invitations) has a shock effect calculated to bring us up short and make us think: people straight off the street, inappropriately dressed, sit down to a gala dinner. But Jesus' parable has two levels of meaning. In the context of the parable as related by Jesus, the audience understands the point to be the invitation to enter the approaching kingdom of God, which calls for radical *metanoia:* no excuse whatever will do; everything else must give way to this invitation. Seek first the kingdom of God; then everything else will come right. But the parable makes a further point: Israel's leaders refuse to accept the coming of God's kingdom in the appearing of Jesus; the *'ammè ha'ares,* the common people, not dressed up in the garb earned through law observance, accept the invitation and are admitted to God's kingdom. Two aspects of Jesus' preaching of God's lordship are observable: on the one hand the unconditional capitulation to God's good tidings that is required, on the other the hope it expresses for 'publicans and sinners' − God's salvation is offered to all without exception. (The expulsion of the man in shabby clothes is Matthean and was originally not part of this story; it does correspond with other parables that demand making the most of the talent of the kingdom of God. What was *salvation* becomes *judgment* for those who reject it.) In the parables taken from happenings in ordinary 'profane' life it is always the same basic elements of Jesus' preaching that shed light on the same message of the coming of God's kingdom. Though they may not all be authentic Jesus material in accordance with the applied combination of criteria from Part One, they give us a full picture of Jesus' central message about the kingdom of God and its *metanoia.* Thus they genuinely derive 'from Jesus'. In particular their consistency is proof of their authenticity: the fact that they consistently point to three fundamental elements of the humaneness of God's lordship and the demand for a corresponding mode of conduct, yet with no [168]
'right to reward'.[86]

The idea embedded in these parables actually resurfaces in many other bits of evidence, each with its own shock effect: someone who leaves ninety-nine

[86] Dan. O. Via, *The parables,* 192.

sheep to fend for themselves in order to go in search of a single lost sheep, because he, the good shepherd, knows each sheep by its pet name (even if Jesus is picking up traditional parables from Israel's rich heritage) (Lk. 15:4-7 and parallel) − the parable of the lost coin (coming from a society where the sheep as a 'unit of exchange' has made way for money) (Lk. 15: 8-10)[87] − parables of hidden treasure, and the at that time universally familiar early Eastern parables regarding 'the pearl' (Mt. 13:45-46).

But towards the end of Jesus' life (see a subsequent chapter) the focus increasingly shifts to the prospect of Israel's rejection of his message of the coming kingdom. This is apparent also in the parable of the wicked tenants (Mk. 12:1-9, parallels in Mt. 21:33-41; Lk. 20:9-16). Like most parables, this one has been fundamentally revised in view of what had occurred in the meantime: the execution of Jesus. It is difficult (supposing this to be an authentic parable of Jesus) to reconstruct Jesus' original 'open parable': 'There was once a man', an example taken from Palestine's cultivation of vineyards with everything appertaining thereto − a common enough phenomenon, which as far back as Isaiah 5:1-7 had already become an image of God's care for Israel, his vineyard. Every so often the vineyard's owner sends a servant to fetch his master's share of the proceeds; but each time the man is maltreated or killed. In the end the landowner sends his beloved son, hoping that they will have some regard for him. But he, too, is murdered. The drift of the parable is this: whoever has been entrusted with God's vineyard (Israel as God's chosen people) owes it to God to 'show a return'; he must act according to the requirements of the property entrusted to him. One who fails to do so is capable of going to any lengths, a veritable spiral of wickedness. That is not all, however. The notion of various messengers, and then a final messenger, the landowner's own son, features in all traditions of this parable. The listener is bound to be reminded of the prophets, sent again and again to Israel by a long-suffering God (the traditional Deuteronomic idea of Israel's rejection and even killing of God's envoys), and finally of the end-time prophet, 'the beloved son'. If this parable, including the elements specified (which are, after all, essential to the unity of the whole, despite possible modifications of detail between
[169] Mark, Matthew and Luke), derives from Jesus himself (which is hard to ascertain), then it conveys Jesus' understanding of himself as the end-time prophet, with the additional prospect, consciously realized, of his coming death. In any event it speaks of an awareness that in its rejection of God's proffered salvation Israel may stop at nothing − a thought not unfamiliar to ancient prophets, hence to pre-Christian Judaism.

When we survey this handful of representative New Testament parables, we

[87] H. Weinrich, 'Narrative theology', in Conc. 9 (1973), n. 5.

see that their explicit narrative content reflects secular situations encountered in real life (without any criticism of, for instance, social conditions, but without condoning these either); those relations, because they are known to all, are used to suggest, via the well known and familiar, something else: an unknown, new existential possibility (peculiar to God's kingdom). Jesus never explains their meaning: the listener must supply that himself, or rather, let the parable itself do the interpreting and filling in. Comments like: 'So the last will be first, and the first last' (Mt. 20:16), 'The master commended the dishonest steward for his prudence' (Lk. 16:8), and 'I tell you, this man went down to his house justified' (Lk. 18:14) are subsequent redactional conclusions that form no part of the original narration. There the conclusion is left to the listener. The parable merely opens up the possibility of a new and different kind of life.

But Jesus does not tell parables just like any anonymous folk sage. They are (or, insofar as Jesus simply took over existing parables current in folk wisdom, they become) part of his whole ministry, characterized by the message of God's coming reign. The point of each parable must be located in that overall context. Besides, situations in Jesus' actual life may have given occasion for telling just this particular parable or telling it in this particular way (though the concrete circumstances to which Jesus is reacting by telling the parable mostly elude us). A purely structural analysis of the parable (which must indeed come first) misses this. 'Tax-collectors and sinners of all kinds kept coming to him to hear him. The Pharisees and the Scribes grumbled about it' (Lk. 15:1-2; see also Lk. 7:31-35, parallel in Mt. 11:16-19; 20:1-15); thereupon Jesus tells the parable about looking for the single lost sheep and the lost coin (Lk. 15:1-10): again these are fitting occasions to which some parables are the obvious, prompt response. Luke suggests this in another context: 'Simon, do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she...; you gave me no kiss, but she...; you did not anoint my head with oil, but she...' [170] (Lk. 7:44-50). True, that contains a lot of secondary elements; but a historical context is certainly suggested. This would be all the more apt if it is true that Jesus told parables mainly in the course of meals offered him by well-to-do citizens who, though perhaps in two minds about him, were certainly interested, but expected their guest to perform the usual ceremonies at the start of a dinner. But even if we admit our ignorance of the concrete occasion of each individual parable, we do know the context of Jesus' life as a whole, in which they were told. Of course, the content and meaning of Jesus' parables in their original tenor, not as yet developed by the New Testament on explicitly christological lines, remain indeterminate and often, in a literal sense, even secular: they speak directly neither of God nor about Jesus himself. But in the setting of Jesus' message and conduct their point is clear: it is God's offer of salvation, God's lordship and the inward *metanoia* that demands; clear, too,

that in light of Jesus' concrete praxis, his actual behaviour, which is as it were a living illustration of the purport of the parables he tells, they pose the question: who is this Jesus? For because Jesus is obsessed with the coming kingdom of God and even talks about it in parables, while at the same time his life is itself a manifest parable of it, we cannot avoid the question: who is he? Who is this teller of parables? In this sense Wilder's conclusion regarding the parables is right: 'They should be understood in relation to the speaker (and the occasion).'[88] Although we hardly ever know what concrete occasion led Jesus to tell a particular parable, his public ministry as a whole does convey an image of who is addressing us and the depth dimension he imparts to the parables. The 'living parable' that Jesus is in his own person and the import of his parable stories confront us with the question whether or not we wish, dare and are able to see in Jesus' activities a manifestation of God's care for people. Although on the surface and in their secular content these parables have obvious theological significance when placed in their Jesus context, they are not directly christological; but given the context of Jesus' whole ministry and praxis, of which they are an integral part, they nonetheless express his self-understanding and therefore pose a 'christological question': whether or not we will allow goodness, love, mercy and grace to be extended to us by this Jesus and, in accepting that grace, accede to his unconditional demand for an
[171] 'about turn' (*metanoia*) in the conduct of our own lives. If so, then we must go on to ask what this salvific relationship with him, as we experience it, implies for the person of Jesus. In their original setting the parables were doubtless vaguer and more 'open' than the versions we now encounter in the New Testament after a couple of generations of Christian transmission, in which the response to these open parables has already been recorded. For in the New Testament account the christological interpretation has already been incorporated into the story itself,[89] following the usage of ancient didactic historiography, which inculcates its own viewpoint and response to the challenge of historical facts in the factual account itself.

Despite being given a more specific meaning in the New Testament − a process which shut the door, as it were, on these open parables by assigning them a fixed, single interpretation − they nonetheless manage to preserve their open, questioning character for us twentieth-century people in a completely new way − precisely because of the crisis in which Christology or their established interpretation finds itself; so for us they once more raise the question: 'But you − you who hear these parables − who do you say that I am?' (Mk. 8:29; Mt. 16:15; Lk. 9:20). Is God's mercy in fact manifested definitively

[88] Arnos Wilder, *The language of the gospel* (New York-Evanston 1964), 94.
[89] See e.g. quite plainly in Mt. 22:1-14, par.; Lk. 14:16-24; Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:11-27; Mt. 13:36-43; especially Mk. 12:1-2, par.;l Mt. 21:33-46; Lk. 20:9-19.

and decisively in and through Jesus of Nazareth? The question can only be answered by those who listen to the parables in the context of the overall parable that is the life of Jesus of Nazareth. In response to the question: 'But you, who do you say that I am?' many believers and theologians may well echo the answers given by Mark and Luke, Augustine, Thomas and Bellarmine, Luther and Calvin, Barth, Bultmann, Pannenberg or Rahner. Their own answer we do not hear. Other people or another age cannot answer on our behalf or supply their adapted images, concepts and expressions: that would not be our response to the parable that is the life of Jesus. Guided by the 'remembrance of Jesus', also by the numerous responses he has evoked over the centuries, we are now, as we listen, confronted with this 'lived parable'. How do we interpret him? Nobody else − neither the historian, nor the theologian, not even the first Christians or the church's magisterium − can answer that question for us. Listening to the parable, we face the question: will you stake your life on it? There are more than enough pointers in the gospel narratives that show awareness of the distance between the Christian church's [172] experience of the power of the crucified-and-risen one, and its recollection of fellowship with the historical Jesus during his days on earth. This is extremely important. It is why the gospels' and the church's account of Jesus' parabolic life still manage to convey the actual core of the story: Jesus of Nazareth himself. Even now we get a keen sense of the challenge: 'Who do *you* say that I am?' (already a question framed in an ecclesial context!) as a question addressed to us.

C. ESCHATOLOGICAL REVOLUTION: JESUS' BEATITUDES

In the view of most exegetes the essence of the beatitudes as incorporated in the sermon on the mount (Matthew) or the sermon on the plain (Luke) has its historical source in Jesus.[90] The Q tradition, which (but for one saying) Luke faithfully reflects (Lk. 6: 20b-21, parallel in Mt. 5:3-4, 6), would seem to be part of the earliest collection of this Jesus tradition. The actual genre of beatitudes is Old Testament, late Jewish, Eastern and ancient culture generally.

This central core of the complex of beatitudes is set in the perspective of the eschatological coming of God's kingdom and the kingdom of God. It is a prophetic, eschatological promise modelled on apocalyptic dialectical beatitudes. A striking feature is that the primary core pronounces no blessing

[90] *Literature.* J. Dupont, *Les Béatitudes* (Louvain, 1954, 1969²), and: 'Béatitudes égyptiennes', in Bibl. 47 (1966), 185-222; S. Légasse, 'Les pauvres en esprit et les "volontaires" de Qumrân', in NTS 8 (1967-8), 336-345; W. Nauck, *Freude im Leiden,* in ZNW 46 (1955), 68-80; E. Schweizer, 'Formgeschichtliches zu den Seligpreisungen Jesu', in NTS 19 (1972-1973), 121-126; A. Gelin, 'Heureux les pauvres', in *Grands thèmes bibliques* (Paris 1966), 79-83; P. Hoffmann, 'Selig sind die Armen', in BuL 10 (1969), 111-122.

on 'virtuous people': 'Blessed are the poor − for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are they that hunger − for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are they that weep − for they shall laugh' (Lk. 6:20b-21, omitting the twice repeated 'now'); this can fairly be identified as the oldest text of this tradition (in Matthew especially a spiritualizing tendency is already apparent). The eschatological blessing is for the poor, the hungry and the sorrowful. A characteristic feature is that of the three beatitudes the last two are in the future tense, the first in the present: the kingdom of God has arrived already, but the laughter and satisfaction are still to come. Here we have the typical dialectics of Jesus' preaching as a whole: God's lordship is already being realized, although its consummation is still to happen; the future has already begun.

The first beatitude refers to the poor in society – confirmed by 'those who hunger' and 'those who weep'. Thus it applies exclusively to outcasts, people
[173] with no status in society − hence the admonitions in the Q tradition not to hoard worldly possessions (Mt. 6:19, 21, parallel in Lk. 12:33-34), not to give ourselves over to worldly cares (Mt. 6:25-33, parallel in Lk. 12:22-31) and not to serve mammon (Mt. 6:24, parallel in Lk. 16:13). Here we have the apocalyptic principle of the reversal of all values: those who are poor now will be rich then. But God himself will reverse these conditions; what is envisaged is an 'eschatological' rather than a social revolution of the existing order. It is not explicitly stated that this revolution is already happening in the dimension of our earthly history, at any rate not in its surface dimension; for – apocalyptically also − in a hidden way life on earth already participates in the ultimate meaning of history as eschatologically manifested. Soon God will be king, and just relations will prevail among men. That is why the message of God's kingdom announces the blessing of the poor, who now are disinherited. The beatitudes regarding the dispossessed are spoken in the assurance that the salvific kingdom of God is near. This does not mean that for the rest the sermon on the mount is a Christian invention. Even if many parts of it may have evolved only after Jesus' death, nurtured in the womb of local Christian congregations, they could still convey Jesus' words authentically, especially as it became increasingly clear that for the Christian church Jesus of Nazareth was in fact both criterion and norm of the Jesus tradition (albeit couched in terms of the constantly shifting, diverse cultural and religious backgrounds and needs of the churches).

The antitheses which follow: 'But woe to you rich . . .' (Mt. 23:25, 23,6-7a,27,4,29-31,13, parallels in Lk. 11:39,42-44,46-48, 52) are secondary; in their apocalyptic context, of course, they are the consequence of the eschatological reversal of all values; it is a (sevenfold) apocalyptic curse. But almost everywhere in the New Testament where Jesus' positively formulated preaching is phrased in negative antitheses it turns out that one is dealing with

secondary texts.

Unless one bears in mind the Jewish and late Jewish background to these lofty benedictions, they are indeed disconcerting texts which to our modern ear may even have a reactionary ring: the poor are having a bad time of it now but just wait, hereafter they will be the privileged ones. Apocalypticists even added: and then they will have a good laugh at the deposed and impoverished rich.[91] Is this Jesus of Nazareth?

Absolutely not. In the first place there is no question here of 'the hereafter', [174] but of God's kingdom that has come to the poor here and now. After all, the same Q source (Mt 22:2-6; Lk. 7:18-23) refers to Isa. 61:1-2 (as does Lk. 4:17-21), where the late Jewish tradition mentions the eschatological prophet, anointed by God, who 'brings glad tidings to the poor'. Jesus, the eschatological prophet, is present among the poor and brings them the joyful message here and now. What is at issue is not a hereafter but God's lordship and rule being realized already in the ministry of Jesus: the eschatological reversal is about to happen now. But the one who orchestrates it is not a Davidic but a prophetic 'anointed', who brings salvation to the poor and so can pronounce them blessed and felicitate them now.

Matthew (5:3-12) clearly grasped the significance of the benediction that he found in his source when he embodied it in a 'great sermon on the mount of God': the parallels with Moses who, followed by his closest companions and behind them a great multitude, ascends the mountain of God, where he is given the tablets of stone and promulgates the decalogue to Israel, are obvious: 'when he sees this multitude', Jesus, the new Moses, ascends the mountain and, just as Moses took his closest associates up the slope with him, 'his disciples came to him' (Mt. 5:1), and Jesus 'opened his mouth and taught them, saying: blessed are the poor...' (Mt. 5:2-3). As Matthew sees it, in the beatitudes Jesus is acting as the leader of the new people of God, to whom a new constitution is given − not a law but a benediction, a promise of salvation. And this promise is made to the poor, the sorrowing and the hungry. An end to their condition is promised by way of a constitution.

What does this mean? The fact that Luke simply speaks of 'the poor', whereas Matthew talks about 'the poor in spirit', is not Luke's way of giving this concept a 'social' slant (though throughout his gospel and in Acts he does show a predilection for the 'poor' in society), but simply reflects fidelity to the source he is using. He is equally inclined to 'spiritualize', and had he found 'poor in spirit' in his source, he would have taken it over. Matthew, by contrast, does spiritualize, evidenced by those beatitudes not contained in Luke which are introduced by him: blessed are the meek, the merciful, the

[91] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 76-84.

pure in heart, the peace-makers. Thus in the oldest tradition (according to the all but unanimous conviction of exegetes) one simply had: 'Blessed are you poor.'

[175] But this idea has a long history. Prior to the entry into the holy land there were no poor in 'Israel'; and the exodus brought them to a 'land of milk and honey, a land of plenty', where the poor have no place. But after settling in 'God's country' all sorts of disparities arose among the farming population as a result of their efforts to amass property. To counter this, various 'social laws' were enacted, the most radical being the introduction of the jubilee year: every seventh year all debts were remitted and slaves set free. In that way every Jew's initial equal entitlement under God's covenant could to some extent be restored (Ex. 21:2-6; 23:10-11; Lev. 25:1-7,18-22; Deut. 15). However, under the monarchy and in the course of urban development social inequality became rife, and so there emerged in Israel the *'ammè ha'ares,* the poor, besides − at the very top − the king, then the army of professional soldiers, officials, the urban aristocracy, the priests in the temple and the local notables at the city gates. Much of their own tradition disappeared and a great deal was taken over from Canaanite culture − a pragmatically inevitable step. Yet it was precisely in this pragmatism that danger lurked. Their distinctive spirituality became diluted. The prophets' protest was directed to that. This prophetic social critique was a call to return, not to a period of pre-urbanization (though it may well give that impression, and one could make 'reactionary' capital out of their criticism), but to the original Yahweh experience of the good pre-urban days. After all, in their entire social critique Amos, Isaiah and Micah never dictate what society should be like; they merely appeal for a return to the true Yahwism[92] from which people had broken away. Yahweh no longer played any part in political decisions (Isa. 31:1-2), the aristocracy and officialdom enriched themselves at the expense of ordinary folk. That is why the prophets' criticism targeted the social upper crust: it was corrupt, took bribes, pursued 'class justice', and the populace was reduced to the bondage of debt and tenancy. All this took no account of Yahweh, the protector of the people. The prophets' protest is based on every Israelite's full-fledged membership of God's people in his land (Isa. 3:14-15): their criticism is religious. In effect conduct in Israel was based on *force majeure;* and that was a flouting of the covenant, which certainly had political and social relevance. The concrete state of affairs was criticized in terms of the notion of God's lordship. Their critique was rooted in zeal for the cause of God, which must be Israel's cause also. So they pronounced God's

[92] See O.H. Steck, 'Prophetische Kritik der Gesellschaft', in *Christentum und Gesellschaft* (Göttingen 1969), 46-62; F. L. Hoszfeld, 'Prophet und Politik in Israel', in BuK 1971, 39-43; J. Schreiner, 'Prophetische Kritik um Israels Institutionen', in *Die Kirche im Wandel der Gesellschaft* (Würzburg 1970), 15-29; H. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern* (Leyden 1964); H. W. Wolff, *Die Stunde des Amos* (Munich 1969).

judgment: the end and dissolution of the present state of affairs (Isa. 5:9-10; Micah 2:4-5, 6-10; 3:12) − no proposals for revolutionary action or reform; [176] simple proclamation of God's annihilating judgment. *God* will react, was the stance adopted by the prophets. He will not let himself be cornered. Thus a vague prospect of salvation-from-God emerged (Micah 2:4-5): a just redistribution of all possessions − by God himself. They spoke only of God's future. No prophet indicted Israel's institutions, only the concentration and abuse of power – the absence of 'ortho-praxis'. But in their view the future was the work of Yahweh alone. The essence of the prophetic critique is distilled in the 'Exodus' spirituality of Deuteronomy: a return to the way things were before the entry into the holy land (Isa. 11:4; Ps. 57:11; 72:2).

What was the situation of the common people in these structures? They were 'the poor', that is, the actual poor in society. But the concept was acquiring a religious implication (Isa. 29:19-21; Zeph. 3; Prov. 16:19; Wisdom 2:10-20). After the exile the repatriates in particular constituted the 'poor remnant', but nurtured and stimulated by ancient Yahwistic spirituality. The 'renewed people' came to be synonymous with 'the poor' (Isa. 51:17; 54:13; especially 49:13), nourished by trito-Isaiahan spirituality (Isa. 61:1-3; see 57:15). 'Poor' here (usually coinciding with social deprivation) refers to the devout and pious individual who in his poverty humbly waits on God (see also Ps. 25; 34; 37:9-11). The 'poor man' is the victim of misfortune (of whatever kind), whose only strength and stay is to entrust himself to God (Isa. 52-53; Ps. 22; Zech. 9:9-10).

Grounded in this age-old tradition the popular conception persisted that the poor, the hungry and the sorrowful are those who have nothing more to hope from human history and can only continue to wait expectantly on God, who is just. In Jesus' time, therefore, the 'poor' among the Jews were people who could not demand justice for themselves, hence could only trust in the justice of God.

Of course, some schools of thought (even religious ones) believed that this inability to demand justice for oneself was relative; they wanted to assist Israel's God by force of arms: the Sicarii and the Zealots. Although Jesus' time was a fairly peaceful spell between events thirty years previously (Judas the Galilean) and thirty years later (leading to the Jewish rebellion against Rome), the fact is that Jesus did not choose this way.

So when Jesus said: 'Blessed are the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful', the [177] people understood what he meant. But Jesus did not repeat what they already knew, namely that given the concrete situation, they could not look for help to any earthly agency and that salvation and deliverance could come only from God. That *was* in fact the late Jewish concept of poverty and Jesus was not proclaiming a tautology. What, then, was he saying?

The eschatological prophet would come bearing glad tidings for the poor.

That was a lively part of popular expectation, rooted in older traditions, among many of the poor and oppressed. Jesus' beatitude signifies that it was happening *now*: that is to say, the yearning expectation of divine succour was about to be fulfilled; promise and expectation were on the point of being realized. With Jesus the kingdom of God came upon them. Jesus felt compassion for these poor folk. God himself would move into action against mankind's history of incomprehensible suffering, insofar as there is no human remedy for it. Firstly, Jesus brings God's message of his radical 'no' to the continuing history of human suffering. The whole point of history, although only the *eschaton* will make this clear, is peace, laughter, satisfaction: salvation and happiness. Just as in earlier times people had tried to articulate the purpose of life and history 'protologically' with reference to the primeval history of all things, in Jesus' day it was described 'eschatologically' with reference to the end of the age. Despite everything, compassion is the deepest purpose that God seeks to fulfil in history. He wills men to live, wills their salvation, not their misery and death. Jesus undeniably expresses all this in terms of the mentality of his time – hence in temporally limited and conditioned terms. Neither can we deny, despite all sorts of necessary distinctions, that for him the end was very near. Hence preparing for the sudden coming of God's kingdom was the most urgent task. Jesus did not preach social revolution, although his eschatological message subjects the whole history of human suffering to God's critical judgment and so calls for an about-turn. This has fundamental consequences for continuing post-Jesus history − implications which must be made explicit. Yet this is not the underlying purport of the beatitudes. What they quite unmistakably enshrine is a spiritual affirmation of the ultimate power of powerlessness − a belief that however necessary it is to improve the world through human resources (that
[178] is, to make explicit God's 'no' to the history of suffering), at the deepest level there is a suffering, an impotence which no human being can alleviate and from which only God's future reign for the good of all men can free us. There is human helplessness which God alone can relieve. That was Jesus' own premise as well. If God wills universal salvation, as Jesus preached when he conveyed the message of God's lordship – if, therefore, God is love, creative love for man, then the poor, the hungry and grief-stricken may already rise up in hope, and say: but all the same... Laughter, not crying, is God's fundamental will for man. That implies, at all events, that he does not will suffering. On no account is Jesus prepared to blame God for suffering and evil. God's essential being is anti-evil, willing good. Later theological distinctions of God's 'positive' and 'permissive' will were introduced by theologians seeking a theoretical explanation for suffering, like the Greek attempts to describe all forms of evil as a 'non-being' so as not to have to fathom it – an escape route

for people who could not locate evil theoretically. In Jesus' eschatological message we hear only God's radical 'no' to all forms of evil, all forms of poverty and hunger that lead to tears. That is Jesus' message; and it has enormous consequences. That in it God refuses to acknowledge the superior strength of evil and so with his own divine being stands surety for the defeat of evil in all its forms can in no way be turned to reactionary or conservative ends. The only message Jesus brings us from God is that God stands surety for us. Hence the poor, the suffering and the disadvantaged indeed have grounds for positive hope. How? Perhaps the rest of the story of Jesus' life, as well as the historical failure of his message and praxis, can tell us more about that. In particular his whole conduct should help to determine whether the overall picture of Jesus' message and preaching tallies with reality, more specifically whether Jesus was indeed the prophet of the imminence of God's kingdom − how he conjoined this message with a praxis intended to change the existing situation radically (with all the attendant dangers) − whether and how, inspired by the gracious mandate he received from God, he knew himself to be the saving instrument of God's approaching kingdom, which in his actions evidently became real among the people who came to him in trust.

Chapter 2

JESUS' PRAXIS

§1 Jesus' caring and abiding presence among people experienced as salvation from God

Introduction

There are only two places in the synoptic gospels where Jesus explicitly extends forgiveness of sins (Mk. 2:1-12, parallels Mt. 9:2-8; Lk. 5:17-26; and Lk. 7:36-50), but everything suggests that such explicit logia are not authentic sayings of the historical Jesus. That is to say, they are the early Christian church's affirmations about Jesus, already acknowledged as the Christ. Yet the grounds for this power to forgive sins, of extending the offer of salvation or fellowship with God, which the Christian community ascribed to Jesus after his death, certainly lie in his concrete activity during his days on earth. Jesus' presence among people, helping them with his mighty deeds, offering or accepting invitations to eat and drink together, not just with his disciples but with the masses and especially with outcasts, publicans and sinners, appear to be an invitation to enter into believing communion with God: the fellowship of Jesus of Nazareth with his fellow men is an offer of salvation extended by God; it has to do with God's coming reign as proclaimed by Jesus. We now examine various aspects of this phenomenon.

A. 'BENEFICENT' REALITY (MK. 7:37) OF GOD'S LORDSHIP, MADE PRESENT IN JESUS' MIGHTY ACTS

Literature. J. Blank, 'Zur Christologie auserwählter *Wunderberichte', Schriftauslegung in Theorie und Praxis* (Munich 1969), 104-128; G. Delling, 'Botschaft und Wunder im Wirken Jesu', *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus* (Berlin 1961[2]), 389-402; R. Formesyn, 'Le semeion johannique et le semeion hellénistique', ETL 38 (1962), 856-894; R. Fuller, [180]
Interpreting the miracles (London 1966); E. Käsemann, 'Wunder', RGG[3] VI, 1835-1837; K. Kertelge, *Die Wunder Jesu im Markus-evangelium (*Munich 1970); Fr. Lentzen-Deis, 'Die Wunder Jesu', ThPh 43 (1968), 392-402; J. B. Metz,

'Wunder', LThK² X, 1263-1265; Fr. Muszner, *Die Wunder Jesu* (Munich 1967); K. Niederwimmer, *Jesus* (Göttingen 1968), 32-36; W. A. de Pater, 'Wonder en wetenschap: een taalanalytische benadering', TvT 9 (1969), 11-54; R Pesch, *Jesu ureigene Taten?* (Quaest. Disp., 52) (Freiburg 1970); J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 111-207; G. Schille, *Die urchristliche Wundertradition,* Stuttgart 1967; A. Suhl, *Die Wunder Jesu,* Gütersloh 1968; A. Vögtle, 'Wunder', LThK 102, 1255-1261; 'Beweisen oder Zeichen'', *Herderkorrespondenz* 26 (1972), H. 10, 509-514.

(a) Hermeneutic horizon of Jesus' miracles

In the 'missionary homilies', edited by Luke but going back to older, proto-Christian traditions, we learn of the first Christians' testimony that Jesus 'went about doing good ... in the country of the Jews' (Acts 10:38f). The 'doing good' is more specifically defined as healing the sick and driving out devils. This tallies with the four gospels' accounts of Jesus' active compassion with the sick and those who, by the standards of that time, were held to be possessed by a demon or demons, 'the prisoners' whom the eschatological prophet was to set free (Isa. 61:1-2). In archaic categories this recollection of Jesus is often rendered with the term 'Jesus the thaumaturgist' or 'miracle worker'; in modern terms, which are what Luke uses in Acts: Jesus' active commitment to his fellow men in distress, Jesus 'who goes about doing good', or Mark's version of the people's response, 'He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak' (Mk. 7:37b). After all, Mark subsumes pre-gospel, early Christian traditions regarding miracles of Jesus under the concept 'glad tidings of Jesus Christ' (Mk. 1:1). In these miracles, Mark is saying, Jesus realized that gladness for a lot of people.

For some time the debate on the problematic issue of Jesus' miracles in modern literature was dominated on the one hand by apologists who allege that these miraculous acts in contravention of natural law prove Jesus' divine mission, and on the other hand by a positivistic, *a priori* approach which summarily expunges everything under the heading 'gospel miracles' from the
[181] New Testament, or at any rate offers a spiritualised interpretation. Fortunately, at least in exegetical circles, this controversy is largely over, thanks to growing awareness of a prior, more fundamental issue, namely, what are the evangelists really getting at when they report the miracles performed by Jesus? Only when that question has been answered can we raise the second or third order question whether Jesus actually did perform miracles and, if so, which ones; in other words, whether there was a historical motive for their faithful transmission in the Jesus tradition, in which they became firmly ensconced.

Even so, the old problem has not been entirely superseded, though the pendulum may have swung the other way. Just as it used to be argued that Jesus performed acts counter to every law of nature, so now some insist, no

less apodictically, that Jesus performed none of the miracles recounted in the gospels, but that he himself is 'the miracle', a miracle of unmerited love and forgiveness; that is what those legends are meant to bring home to us. Here, despite a kernel of truth, we have the reverse side of what once passed for a picture of the historical Jesus. It looked very much like this: a Jesus who cures the blind and deaf, heals lepers and cripples and raises the dead; a Jesus who drives out devils, quells a storm with a word and walks on water as though on solid ground, multiplies loaves without anybody noticing it and yet all partake of it, who changes water into wine for the benefit of some merry wedding guests, and so forth. Catalogued like that, it is evident that, in terms of tradition history, disparate literary genres in the gospels have actually been ripped out of the hermeneutic horizon in which the evangelists meant them to be understood. That indeed makes Jesus a 'miracle man' in whom we can no longer find salvation. For even if Jesus had done all these things, historically and literally, what would that signify for us here and now? After all, we no longer see instances of loaves being multiplied among us. For us water – however great our faith in him may be – is just water; and the dead no longer return. In his own day Jesus helped and healed a few; but what does that signify for mankind? I remember reading somewhere: what is a social worker *now* to make of Jesus' miracles then? Even if Jesus did miraculously feed some five thousand people, what does that mean for the two thirds of mankind who go hungry today? We can only conclude that Jesus' contemporaries must have understood the word 'miracle' differently from the way we do. Even thunder and lightning were 'marvels' of God's nature in those days, whereas on [182] scientific grounds we think we know better.[1] Anyone who tells miracle stories is living in what is plainly a 'transitional world'; he is no longer a primitive for whom everything is 'miraculous' and accounts of specific miracles are pointless – even though he acknowledges gradations in the realm of the miraculous; but neither is he a citizen of a secularized, technological welfare state in which there is no room for 'miracles'. For someone who deliberately augments the overall positively meaningful account of things with miracle stories the world around him appears in part rationally intelligible, in part elusive, mysterious. Telling miracle stories is a human existential genre which, whilst familiar with modern laws of nature, knows that they represent only a partial view of reality, seen from a particular angle. Narrators of such tales would certainly not argue that in spite of everything miracles are still possible in human lives. For Jews, Greeks and Romans at the time that was self-evident; but that Jesus of all people should be 'doing miracles' caused bewilderment all round about the identity of this person, whose background everybody knew.

[1] Thus – and rightly – Niederwimmer, *Jesus,* 32.

The problem for these people was not miracles as such; but being confronted with the 'miracles of Jesus' was a concrete challenge. That is the spirit in which we have to read the gospels. In Jesus something extraordinary made its appearance in history, something which his opponents ascribed to 'demonic sources', but which gave his followers a sense of inexpressible closeness to the innermost core of reality: God. For us this is 'what has to be interpreted': the reality that is the historical Jesus, who by his extraordinary conduct engendered these two quite extreme, alternative interpretations: 'of God' and 'of the devil'. Such extreme verdicts are not passed on just any run of the mill person; they presuppose some sort of marvellous phenomenon, perceived and acknowledged as such by all parties. This insight must historically precede every possible theory and argument if the interpreter of the texts, and in the end the believer as well, is not to miss the point of these narratives. The argument that modern scholarship has clearly and definitively settled the 'miracle question' may be true (from one particular angle); but it doesn't get anywhere near the heart of the New Testament problem and, moreover, is based on the false assumption that there is no longer room for any non-scientific approach to reality. It also fails to inquire into the intentions
[183] underlying the telling of miracle stories in the New Testament, a widespread practice in the ancient world, albeit essentially different from what we find in the New Testament. We must first understand what the New Testament writers' intentions were in relating the miracle stories before the historical question can assume its equally rightful, but also rightly located, importance.

(b) *Jesus' miraculous freedom 'to do good' (Mk. 3:4)*

It is remarkable that the profane Greek word for 'miracle' (*thauma*) does not occur in the gospels; they merely say that certain sayings and deeds of Jesus aroused *thaumadzein* among the people, that is, surprise and amazement. The gospels refer to certain acts of Jesus as 'signs' (*sèmeia*) and 'mighty acts' (*dunameis*) or simply 'works of the Christ' (*ta erga tou Christou*).[2] This implies that, just as in former times God helped people who believed in him in miraculous ways, so he is doing now in Jesus of Nazareth. Whether they are for Jesus or against him, what amazes people in his ministry is interpreted by believers as God's saving acts in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus as it were vouches for God's help to people in distress.

[2] The word pair *'sèmeia kai terata'* comes from the Deuteronomic view of the prophets: Deut. 6:22; 7:19; 13:2-3; 26:8; Ex. 7:3; Jer. 32:20-21; Isa. 8:18; 20:3; Ps. 78:43; Neh. 9:10. See Rengstorf in ThWNT VII, 209, 219. In NT: Acts 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; 15:12; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; 2 Thess. 2:9; Acts 2:19,22,43; 6:8; 7:36. Elsewhere: *'sèmeia kai dunameis'* (Acts 8:13; Rom. 15:19). *'Sèmeion'* only: Acts 4:16-22; 8:6; Rev. 13:13-14. In very broad terms: *'teras'* refers to the astonishing aspect of an incomprehensible event; *'sèmeion'* points to God in an event; *'dunameis'* (Gal. 3:5; Acts 2:22) are 'mighty works' or acts of power. All three appear together in Hebr. 2:4 and Acts 2:22.

The fact that Jesus' activity, by virtue of its very uniqueness, was open to a dual interpretation ('of God' or 'of the devil') must be historically assumed if we are to understand, on the one hand, his execution and, on the other, his 'canonisation' as Christ. For these are both historical facts and thus presuppose a prior phenomenon, 'miraculous' and at the same time provocative, albeit in human terms disputable. In other words: by their very pro or anti reaction both interpretations of Jesus attest the miraculous quality of his presence. This, in my view, is the crucial point of the whole 'miracle issue' to be taken into account before the so-called 'real' question – the reason for these miracles in his life – can be analysed.

Besides, it is abundantly clear from the New Testament that 'miracles' are not viewed in a modern hermeneutic horizon: the question whether or not laws of nature are being abrogated (a view alien to both Old and New Testaments, because there things are what they are through God's ever new creative, or 'heart-hardening', deeds). They have to be viewed in terms of a hermeneutic horizon (or inquiry) centring on 'the power of the evil one' versus 'the power of God'. That is why exorcisms and healings of the sick (for the [184]
Jews, illness in the broadest sense meant being in the power of the evil one) play such a central a role in the accounts of Jesus' miraculous acts (in tradition history they also form the earliest layer of the pre-canonical miracle tradition). Jesus' ministry and manifestation per se are regarded by the evil powers as acts of aggression (Mk. 1:23-24 and parallels; 5:7ff and parallels; 9:20-25). In the face of the evil and hurtful results produced by these powers Jesus performs only good, beneficent acts. That is the really remarkable thing in a human story that for many is above all a story of suffering, suffering under the power of evil. In the struggle between God's good power and the demonic powers which afflict, torment and seduce people, therefore, Jesus assigns himself an explicit function. Later on Christians saw this only too clearly: as God initially at the creation declared that everything was good, so now it is said of the eschatological prophet: 'He has done all things well' (Mk. 7:37), while Satan, the evil power, is the one who makes people deaf, blind, leprous and dumb. The power of goodness manifested in Jesus, on the other hand, delivers people from all the tribulations of Satan. That is the New Testament's ancient hermeneutic horizon for what are called Jesus' signs and mighty acts; viewed thus the contravention or otherwise of natural laws is immaterial, both to Jesus and to his hearers, participating in the event either approvingly or disapprovingly. The miraculous element that finds expression in Jesus doesn't matter either to his opponents or to his supporters; what does count is the ultimate interpretation of what both parties alike experience. An interesting point is that the 'material' of the miracle stories quite certainly comes from Galilee (northeast Galilee and the environs of the lake) – the region where Jesus

originally resided and where he lived and pursued his ministry the longest.[3] The first transmitters of the miracle tradition regarding Jesus were the circle in which Jesus operated during his Galilean ministry; that tradition then came into contact with other traditions in broader early Christian circles, with which they were duly integrated, albeit not without certain theological corrections (see Part Three: 'aretalogy').

The miracle tradition presents a memory of Jesus of Nazareth as he came across to ordinary rural Galileans, neglected as they were by all religious movements and groups. Remarkably, both John the Baptist and Jesus addressed these same common people and were welcomed enthusiastically. In
[185] such a setting the veneration felt for a doer of good deeds naturally burgeoned into the making of legends in which, when power is put to the service of goodness and good deeds as it was in Jesus' case, that power seizes the popular imagination. In fact, Mark incorporates elements from his miracle tradition in which Jesus is depicted virtually as a 'village miracle healer' (Mk. 7:31-37; 8:22-26) and magician (Mk. 5:1-20; 11:12-14, 20-22). In the gospels, though Jesus' reservations about biased misrepresentation are discernible, he runs this risk all the same.

In the Q community, which reports only two of Jesus' miracles – an exorcism and a healing – in a very matter-of-fact style (and only in its later stage), the spotlight is on the *source* of Jesus' astonishing acts rather than on the miracle itself (Lk. 11:14-23 parallel Mt. 12:22-30; Lk. 7:1-10 parallel Mt. 8: 5-13). In this tradition Jesus himself says: if I drive out devils 'by the finger of God' (Lk. 11:20), it must be obvious that God's reign has come upon you. The background here is late Jewish demonology: sickness (in this case a man who is blind and dumb) derives from a demon, which is itself called dumb (Lk. 11:14). The expulsion of the dumb demon enables the sick man to speak and see again, and communication is restored. Such acts of exorcism are also to be found among Jesus' Jewish contemporaries (Mt. 12:27; Lk. 11:19). The point of the argument is rather: why may they ascribe it to God, and Jesus may not? Thus in the Q community the 'miracle' is in no way regarded as an unequalled accomplishment of Jesus, setting him apart from his entire cultural and religious environment. Yet his healing act is given a deeper interpretation: here God's reign is already present. In Jesus' case the expulsion of demons and healing of the sick point to the dawn of the eschatological time of salvation. God himself is active in Jesus ('by the finger of God', that is, in Semitic terms, 'by God's intervention': Ex. 8:19; Dan. 9:10). This is 'realized' eschatology (albeit in the context of the church's expectation of Jesus' speedy parousia). This link between exorcism and the presence ('realization') of God's reign is

[3] R. Pesch, *Jesu Ureigene Taten?*, 19-20; E. Trocmé, *Jésus de Nazareth*, 117f., followed by his pupil K. Tagawa, *Miracles et évangile* (Paris 1966), 48 ('récits provinciaux et folkloriques').

evidently not an established tenet of either the Christian or the Jewish faith. It presupposes that Jesus is the eschatological prophet.

The second healing in the Q source (Lk. 7:1-10; Mt. 8: 5-13), where the servant or son of a centurion – a pagan – is cured, is another telling example. The fact that this is an act of 'remote' healing is not meant to sensationalize the miracle. Actually all cures 'at a distance' in the New Testament involve 'pagans'; it is a consequence of the fact that Jews did not enter pagan homes, as [186] the pagan Judaeophile centurion courteously explains: 'I am not worthy to have you come under my roof' (Mt. 8:8). The crux of the matter lies in Jesus' *exousia*: he has complete power and authority, as a centurion has over his troops (Mt. 8:9); someone like that need only speak a word and everybody complies. Thus the centurion acts in the belief that Jesus has only to issue a command and the disease will disappear – in other words, belief in the power of Jesus' word. The account of this healing was obviously included by Q as a paradigm. The Q community is presenting not so much a Christology as a soteriology: salvation in Jesus, imparted by God.[4]

Besides recounting these two miracles, the same later Q community shows how it envisages miracles done by Jesus in his reply to the question put by the disciples of John (the three pericopes form a single tradition complex with the same purport and, therefore, presumably with a similar intention):[5] 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them' (Mt. 11:4-5 parallel Lk. 7:18-23). This passage was regarded for a long time (in modern exegesis) as authentic Jesus material; but P. Stuhlmacher[6] advances fairly cogent grounds for regarding it as an early Christian creation by Christian prophets. Matthew speaks in this connection of *ta erga tou Christou*, that is Jesus' messianic activities. Even so, those 'works' typify not the messiah of the Davidic dynasty but the messianic eschatological prophet as conceived of by Judaism in the tradition complex found in Isa. 26:19 (the dead are raised); 29:9-10,18-19 (the blind see); 35:5-6,8 (likewise the blind see); 42:18 (the deaf hear); 43:8 (the blind see, the deaf hear); 61:1-3 (those that mourn are comforted, to the poor the good news is proclaimed; see also 52:7). The Q logion is a fusion of various Isaiahan texts: the catalogue of miracles of the Christ tradition associated with the end-time prophet. It includes no references to the driving out of devils or exorcism - nor to the healing of lepers or the raising of the dead. These are part of the general prophetic tradition (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; 2 Kings 5).

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[4] A. P. Polag, 'Zu den Stufen der Christologie in Q' (Studia Evangclica, V-1) (Berlin 1968), 72-74; Schulz, *Q-Ouelle,* 203-213; 236-246; G. Delling, 'Botschaft und Wunder', l.c., 393; cf. Blank, *Schriftauslegung,* 121ff; R. Pesch, *Jesu Ureigene Taten?,* 36-44.

[5] J. Blank, *Schriftauslegung,* 124-128; R. Pesch, *Jesu Ureigene Taten?,* 36-44; Schulz, *Q.-Q«elle,* 190-203.

[6] *Das paulinisebe Evangelium,* I. *Vorgeschichte* (Tübingen 1968), 223-224.

Besides, it would seem that the synoptic accounts of reviving the dead (see Mk. 5: 22-43; Lk. 7:11-17) are modelled on Old Testament texts. It follows that the distinctive character of Jesus' miracles reported in the gospels presupposes identification with the 'messianic' eschatological prophet. In this identification
[187] it certainly is difficult to draw a clear line between interpretations before and after his death (see Part Three). Nevertheless the secondary elements (healing of lepers and raising of the dead) in the account of Jesus' reply do capture the primary meaning of this Q logion very aptly. Jesus is the eschatological prophet who performs the miracles expected of him (in this tradition complex). The original form of this passage seems therefore to have been: 'The blind see, the lame walk, and to the poor the good news is proclaimed. Blessed is the one who is not scandalized by me.'[7] In them the 'finger of God' is discernible.[8] Hence the fact that Jesus is interpreted as the eschatological prophet, to whom this tradition complex (previously interpreted in Judaism) attributes certain miraculous 'mighty deeds', means that we need not regard every gospel account of those mighty acts as a recollection of a specific historical miracle, but rather as one that justified his identification with the eschatological prophet. Only after that (substantiated) identification was it possible to recount, without nervous qualms, the miracles traditionally ascribed to the eschatological prophet as being, very concretely, the acts of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus historical and 'kerygmatic' components of the gospels often merge in a fabric of interwoven threads difficult to tease apart. The Q logion and the synoptic logion of Jesus' reply to the question put by John's disciples are evidence, although secondary, of early Christian (pre-Easter?) identification of Jesus with the eschatological prophet (one of the premises of this 'christological proof') on the one hand and, on the other, of a very old miracle tradition about Jesus, which permitted his identification with the eschatological prophet. The temptation narratives in the Q source (Mt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:1-13) moreover show that in this tradition Jesus refused to perform 'legitimizing' miracles purely for his own advantage without being of use or benefit to people. Jesus performs the miracles of the charismatic eschatological prophet, and no others. Through his miracles he brings a joyful message to the poor, not just in words but in deeds. He is the eschatological prophet who brings the joyous tidings: 'Your God reigns' (Isa. 52:7; see 61:1). Even in these Isaiahan passages, the fact that the deaf hear and the blind see has profound metaphoric significance: being blind is a sign of separation from God; to see is to have access to salvation; and the 'eschatological prophet' is the 'light of the world' (Isa. 42:6-7). Jesus is enlightenment and liberates those who come to

[7] J. Blank, *Schriftauslegung,* 125.
[8] R. Pesch, *Jesus Ureigene Taten?,* 152, n. 138; Muszner, *Auferstehung,* 51; Polag, *Stufen der Christologie,* 72-74; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 203-213.

meet him. Thus the early Christian tradition of Jesus' miracles must be seen in [188]
the first instance (apart from the equally important question of their historical authenticity) as evidence of a very ancient tradition which identifies Jesus of Nazareth with the eschatological prophet as that notion functioned in Judaism in terms of the Isaiahan tradition (deutero- and trito-Isaiah), acquiring (see Part Three) even more pregnant significance in later Jewish 'Solomonic' wisdom literature. To some extent this represents a hermeneutic circle, in which Jesus' historically heavily emphasized deeds compel us to recognize him as the 'eschatological prophet', whereupon, given that recognition, people unhesitatingly ascribe the 'traditionally received' miracles of the eschatological prophet concretely – and in distinctly local Galilean guise – to this Jesus of Nazareth (thus identified). To put it crudely: having once acknowledged Jesus on historical grounds as the eschatological prophet, people could ascribe to him, 'unhistorically', a number of miracles which in (historical) fact he never performed. In literary scholarship this phenomenon is known as epic concentration (e.g. attributing the heroic deeds of other men to Charlemagne). If one keeps this hermeneutic circle in view (and historical facts are the only reason to do so), the New Testament broadening of the field of vision (based on data from earlier traditions) presents no problem at all – except for someone to whom religion is a computer calculation. In that sense R. Pesch's distinction between 'Jesus' historical mighty acts' and their 'kerygmatic implication' is correct,[9] although, following J. Roloff,[10] we should perhaps give greater credence than Pesch does to reminiscences of historical facts grounded in Jesus' actual life on earth, because kerygmatic interpretation without any historical basis is up in the air and opens the door to a purely ideological superstructure, unrelated to the historical phenomenon of Jesus. But within this circle of facts and interpretation even miracle stories in the gospels which lack an immediate historical basis in the life of Jesus of Nazareth take on an eminently theological meaning. Without them the subsequent resurrection story would lose all reality. The condition for any further, more profound interpretation was – and remains – the historically grounded, though not apodictically imperative, identification of Jesus with the expected eschatological prophet; in other words, the final criterion remains the real, historical Jesus of Nazareth.

So there are indeed purely kerygmatic miracle stories relating to Jesus, in [189]
addition to the marvellous – albeit ambivalent – acts which Jesus did in point of historical fact perform. This explains why there is a growing conviction among the majority of critical exegetes that Jesus performed historical cures and exorcisms. Thus there are solid historical grounds for affirming, as the

[9] R. Pesch, *Jesu Ureigene Taten?*, 143.
[10] Roloff, *Das Kerygma*, 111-207.

New Testament does, that Jesus acted as both healer and exorcist. The gospels make it clear that salvation which does not manifest itself here and now in concrete, individual human beings has nothing to do with 'glad tidings'. The dawn of God's reign becomes visible on earth, in history, through victory over the 'powers of evil'. This is what Jesus' miracles illustrate. In the struggle with evil Jesus is totally on God's side. Jesus is a power of goodness that conquers Satan (Mk. 3:27 and parallels). In this real offer of salvation, concretized in Jesus' life on earth, one senses a *christological* problem.

Two borderline cases serve to show how on the one hand post-Easter experiences influenced the miracle narratives in the gospels and have sometimes been 'edited' to illustrate the Christian *kerygma*, and on the other hand how some miracle stories are based on clear historical recollection.[11]

From a source peculiar to Matthew, Mt. 17:24-27 records a discourse on temple taxation, to which a miracle has been appended: '... not to give offence to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself' (17:27). This motif from ancient fables was universally familiar at the time (especially in the form of a precious pearl in the mouth of a fish). Clearly the fabulous motif is employed here simply to say that should he need it, Jesus has everything readily available, because the Father is looking after him. No reader at that time would have taken this passage literally. They understood it rather as a parable designed to clarify the *kerygma*. This is why it is so difficult to subsume everything in the gospels that appears 'miraculous' under the general category of 'miracle stories'; a whole spectrum of diverse genres comes under that heading, and they do not all stem from the miracle tradition.

In contrast to the 'non-miracle' of Mt. 17:27 – albeit a parable or illustration of the belief that anyone who seeks first the kingdom of God will be provided with everything else – we have the account of the healing of Peter's fever-stricken mother-in-law (Mk. 1:19-31 and parallels). Various linguistic
[190] signals indicate that the passage itself is inviting us to regard the substance of the story as a historical incident, even though the literary model is that of a miracle story. It takes place in what is described as the house of Peter and Andrew; the patient is Peter's mother-in-law. The healing occurs when Jesus happens to drop by and learns about the illness: a very simple miracle, performed out of friendship. Obviously there are remembered biographical details, recorded in the tradition because of their connection with Peter. The simple facts were preserved, without pious allegorical language or the kind of embellishments we find in other cases. And Peter's mother-in-law, up and

[11] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 115-119.

about again, at once begins to prepare a meal (1:31b). The incident is reported simply and solely because it happened and has a connection with Peter. Above all, it typifies Jesus. In Lk. 4:38-39 the illness is graver and a command is addressed to the fever, as in a case of exorcism. Matthew 8:14-15, on the other hand, schematizes the whole scene by confining the characters to Jesus and the ailing mother-in-law; Jesus sees that she is ill and takes the initiative, without anybody asking or suggesting anything. Matthew rounds off the whole episode (along with a summary) with a reference to Isa. 53:4: 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases' (Mt. 8:17), thus connecting the historical reminiscence with a post-Easter interpretation and clarifying its theological implication.

After this preliminary scrutiny of Jesus' 'mighty deeds' – taken mainly from the Q tradition – we must now examine in more detail how the incorporation of the miracle strand from the Jesus tradition into the New Testament gospel tradition conserved and corrected the older strands, or gave them a different slant in accordance with a particular theological point of view.

From its own special perspective in the synoptic context the Markan gospel has incorporated the material presented to it – or parts of it at any rate – into what it calls the *euaggelion*. This reworked material is substantially adopted by Matthew and Luke as well. Apart from this source, Matthew and Luke have only one miracle story from the Q source (Mt. 8:5-13=Lk. 7:1-10). In addition Luke contains a number of miracles from a source or tradition peculiar to himself (Lk. 5:1-11; 7:11-17; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 17:11-19). The material in the Markan gospel is therefore the chief source of the synoptic tradition in this respect; but the quite different sources and the different tradition reflected in [191] John show that very wide-ranging miracle traditions relating to Jesus of Nazareth were current in early Christianity.

This is remarkable if we recall that Mk. 8:11-13 clearly indicates Jesus' opposition to any demand that he should 'provide signs' or perform miracles (also see Mt. 15:32-39). The original element there, namely Mk. 8:12, corresponds to a Q logion (Mt. 12:39 and 16:4; Lk 11:29): 'Will this generation be given a sign? ... It shall not be given.' The miracle refused here is envisaged in the Old Testament sense as *'oth*, that is a legitimizing sign,[12] as distinct from miracles in the sense of 'mighty works' or acts of power (see Mk. 6:2,5). Legitimizing signs in the form of miracles are expected from prophets. Hence the fact that Jesus was asked for a sign implies that he was being asked for his credentials as a prophet – indeed, as the eschatological prophet. According to Mark Jesus refused to give such a miraculous sign. As Mark saw it, therefore, Jesus' actual miracles were powerful good deeds, responding to the need of the

[12] K. Rengstorf, in ThWNT VII, 217-218.

moment. The demand for a miraculous sign and its refusal actually follow an account of three miracles which Jesus had already performed (Mk. 7:24-8:10), thus underscoring the radical difference between 'mighty deeds' and legitimizing miraculous signs. Mark reports Jesus being asked for a 'miracle from heaven', that is, a quite specific marvel whereby God himself endorses Jesus' prophetic ministry: then everyone would know for sure that Jesus was sent by God; then they would believe in him. In Mark's view that is precisely what Jesus declines to do: the earthly Jesus is and remains ambivalent during his lifetime; one has to trust him. Jesus remains himself and will perform no miracles 'to order' or as 'canonical' proof of anything whatever, but solely in order to help people in distress (Mk. 1:41; 5:19; 6:34; 8:2; 9:22; 10:47-48). Yet this is still the best way of showing who he is: simply himself, 'going about doing good'. It in no way involves taking a stand for or against miracles: Mark is concerned with a christological issue – with Jesus' personality and essential nature, just as elsewhere he has Jesus put an embargo on all (in Mark's view) 'heretical' Christologies. Jesus does not seek to legitimize his mission and ministry; in everything he does, including his miracles, he is simply himself.

In 13:21-23 Mark again has Jesus warning us against false prophets who will arise in the last days and perform signs and wonders. Here miraculous acts are specifically linked with false prophecy, as in Deut. 13:2-4, where in terms of
[192] tradition history the term *sèmeia kai terata* forms part of the legitimation of an envoy from God. Jesus, by contrast, is simply kind to his fellow men, and to that end sometimes performs surprising acts which can be interpreted ambiguously (see Mk. 3:22-30). Thus Mark will never speak of Jesus' saving deeds as *sèmeia kai terata*.[13] Jesus does not legitimize himself. He is not worried about his own identity; he is himself in all he does: identifying with people in fear and distress in order to free them from their self-alienation and restore them to themselves, which in its turn frees them for others and for God.

As far as redaction history is concerned, we can trace three major groups of miracle stories in the Markan gospel:[14] (a) healings and expulsions of demons (Mk. 1-3, including the summaries in 1:32-34 and 3:7-12 and 3:22-27); (b) the major 'mighty deeds' recorded in 4:35-5:43, of which 6:1-6a provides a concluding interpretation; (c) various miracles in Galilee and its environs in Mk. 6-8. After the digression in Mk. 8:27-30 (Peter's confession of the messiah and the prospect of suffering) only two miracles, both accomplished with some difficulty, are reported: the healing of a possessed boy (9:14-29) and of a blind man (10:46-52).

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[13] Only in Acts 2:22 are the terms '*sèmeia kai terata*' applied to Jesus' wonderful acts of goodness, in a context of mission, where his miracles do indeed function as legitimizing proof of his divine mission. See: K. Kertelge, *Die Wunder Jesu,* 29.

[14] Kertelge, *Die Wunder Jesu,* 49.

In 1:32-34 Mark, as it were, summarizes 'a day's work for Jesus of Nazareth' as follows: he preaches in synagogues (1:21-28) and 'that evening, at sundown, they brought all who were sick or possessed with demons to him. And the whole city was gathered together about the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons' (1:32-34). Jesus conveys a message – the message of God's lordship and reign – in word and deed. This includes the memory of the impression of powerful goodness he had made on the people, even though by now it was the post-Easter era, in which Jesus had already been venerated as the crucified-but-living one for some time. Nonetheless one senses very clearly an awareness of the distance between now and then. As yet Mark wants to say no more than that during his earthly life this man, Jesus, was conspicuous among his fellows for his goodness and compassion. What lay behind that, what the source of this astonishing goodness was, is left unsaid for the present. At any rate, in Jesus salvation becomes a matter of personal experience. That a divine mystery lies hidden here is passed over in silence for the time being: 'I know who you are, the Holy One of God,' (1:24) is the cry of the evil spirits; but Jesus enjoins silence on the possessed man, for prior to Jesus' suffering and death this secret might be given a slanted and totally false interpretation. The same prohibition [193] applies in Mk. 3:7-12; but in both cases the healed people speak out in spite of it. A consistent feature is the way Jesus is constantly besieged by crowds of people: first by those from the limited vicinity of Capernaum in Galilee (1:21, 33), then from further afield, from Judaea and even from pagan parts (Idumea beyond the Jordan, Tyre and Sidon; 3:7-8). In the end a multitude assembles wherever he appears (6:53-56), and he cures each and every disease out of sheer compassion. Another consistent feature is that Jesus never takes the initiative in performing miracles. He will not disappoint those who come to him for healing; he is unwilling to attribute to himself the role of healer, but he feels deeply for all who put their trust in him (Mk. 5:25-34; Mt. 8:5-13 and parallel). Whenever he notices any doubt on that score he holds back (Mk. 9:14-30 and parallels). Jesus' nearness or presence is experienced as salvation. These deeds, according to Mark, express 'a new teaching with authority' (1:27). There is no distinction between sayings (logia) and deeds. Jesus' deeds are in themselves 'a gospel'; the glad tidings to the poor consist in being healed thanks to Jesus' presence, without even saying that these people 'believe in him'. They simply come to him with their misery. Here salvation is bestowed on people who in their realization of their wretchedness fulfil the only proper condition for eventually being able to receive the gospel as *glad* tidings. Jesus' being thronged by people is like the helpless cry of the human history of woe. At the same time it represents the hope which, thanks to Jesus, now enters into that sad history: someone who goes about doing nothing but good; a man in

whom there is no evil. Although all this remains highly ambiguous for the time being, from Mark's point of view it essentially reflects the impression Jesus made on many during his life on earth. Mark got a taste of that in the material passed down to him and he respected the tendency in this material: the accumulated history of human suffering, on the look-out for Jesus, who brings deliverance. But at the same time Mark posits an eschatological proviso as a counterweight to the popular rush for salvation. He does so from the very start, but the meaning only becomes evident after the caesura in his gospel: Mk. 8:27, Peter's confession of the messiah, a 'triumphalism' which Jesus immediately counteracts by opening up the prospect of suffering. From then on the report of the people's flocking to Jesus trails off and even ceases altogether. The people, whole towns, reject him. From then on he apparently
[194] withdraws from the multitudes and concentrates on instructing his disciples. The one healing which still follows in Bethsaida, where he is now repudiated (Mk. 8:22-26) (see also 7:31-36), is accomplished only with difficulty, as if unbelief encumbers the whole incident; it is also deliberately conducted out of sight of those present (likewise in Mk. 7:33). Jesus withdraws from the crowd and sets about forming a core group of disciples.

Besides several general summaries of Jesus' miraculous ministry (Mk. 1:32-34; 1:39; 3:7-12; 6:53-56), Mark recounts sixteen individual miracle stories. The size of Jesus' miracle repertoire indicates that for Mark the miracles have special significance for 'the gospel of Jesus Christ', which they do not have to the same extent in other early Christian traditions (the Q community recorded only two miracles, and these focus primarily on a debate arising out of them; Paul's gospel says nothing about Jesus' miracles). This would suggest (see above) that for Mark 'the gospel' by its very nature includes historical recollection of what Jesus said and, more especially, what he did. Mark sets out to portray Jesus as someone who makes people glad, who indeed brings them an *euaggelion*. In his account, therefore, Jesus' miracles have evangelical meaning: Jesus brings salvation, because he is the Spirit filled Son (Mk. 1:9-11). That is why Satan retreats wherever Jesus appears (1:23-28), for wherever he appears God's reign, which he proclaims, is close at hand (1:14-15). The people who flock to him in their misfortune imploring healing and deliverance do not as yet realize this (and Mark, for that matter, nowhere criticizes them for it): in Jesus one is faced with the reality of God's kingdom of good deeds (see Mk. 7:37). Only after his death would this become patently clear in the experience of the community to which God's lordship had been revealed.

(c) *Jesus' call to faith in and return to God. Faith and mighty works*

In many miracle stories we find the expression 'your faith has saved you' or 'your faith is great, may it be done to you just as you wish'. This is obviously a

fixed formula in the New Testament, whether addressed to the sufferer personally (Mk. 5:34; Lk. 8:48; Mt. 9:22; Mk. 10:52; Lk. 18:42; Mt. 20:31; Mt. 9:29; Lk. 7:50; 17:19; Acts 3:16) or to the person's companion (Mt. 8:13); sometimes in the form of an inducement to have faith (Mk. 5:36; Lk. 8:50; Mk. 9:23; Mt. 9:28), sometimes to confirm that the person believes (Mk. 2:5; Mt. 8:10; Lk. 7:9; Acts 14:9). So it appears to be a fixed formula, associated with the genre of healing stories. Besides that (and apart from the general use of the term 'believing' or 'having faith') the only other reference is to the power of faith as contrasted with lack of faith – but exclusively in relation to the attitude of the disciples who followed Jesus (Mk. 11:23, parallels Mt. 21:21; Lk. 17:6; Mt. 17:20; and in three independent texts). The miracles which are primarily or secondarily concerned with saving faith are, generally speaking, performed by Jesus on 'outsiders' or 'disciples' in the broader sense – everyone asking him for help. A useful slant on the problem, it seems to me, is provided by the story of the ten cleansed lepers, one of whom returns to Jesus (according to a peculiarly Lukan tradition; Lk. 17:11-19). The point of the story is that only one, having been cleansed, comes back to Jesus because of a 'personal change of heart' (in a secondary version this is underscored by making that one a Samaritan, i.e. a semi-pagan, Lk. 17:16,18). The salient point is that the other nine are also cured, but the one who makes his way back to Jesus is told: 'Your faith has made you well' (Lk. 17:19). Only one of the ten grasped the point of what Jesus had done: by going back to Jesus he acknowledged that it was Jesus who had afforded him God's help. Nevertheless the others, too, were 'made well'; thus another form of trust was operative there. This instance shows that the purpose of Jesus' mighty acts is to offer his fellow men saving fellowship with God. [195]

Up to a point this is already apparent in Mk. 5:25-34: 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease' (5:34). The sick woman had been at her wits' end for years; she had tried everything and her condition got steadily worse. Then she heard about Jesus. 'She ... came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment' (5:27). A desperate gesture by a simple woman full of trust! And 'she was healed'. Here faith is more than some sort of magical transfer of power – even though it is told as if physical energy passed from Jesus into the woman (5:30). But it was her faith that saved her, that is, her personal act of resorting to Jesus is the decisive factor. Within her magical behavioural pattern she nonetheless sought God's help in Jesus.[15]

This narrative is woven into another miracle story about the daughter of Jairus, a leader of the synagogue (Mk. 5:21-24, 35-43). In the interval caused by the events of the aforementioned story (Mk. 5:25-34) the girl died. But: 'Do not

[15] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 154.

be afraid, just keep on having faith' (Mk. 5:36b); for after the ensuing fatal
[196] conclusion they had tried to stop the leader of the synagogue from pursuing the matter with Jesus any further. And the final answer is: persevere in your faith which led you to come to me. The point is: go on hoping against hope, clinging to Jesus and look to him for God's help. 'Keeping on believing' is not direct, general trust in God, but turning to the person of Jesus, who vouches for God's help.

Mk. 9:23 (9:14-29) expressly states that 'all things are possible to the one who believes'. The disciples had tried to expel the evil spirit from the sick boy (9:14-18), 'and they were not able', whereupon Jesus says: 'O faithless generation' (9:18-19). But the boy's father says: 'I believe, help my unbelief' (9:24). Again, in the healing of the centurion's son or servant (Mt. 8:10b=Lk. 7:9b), the operative factor is the man's faith in Jesus as one who, being empowered by God, has authority even over diseases; likewise with the healing of blind Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:46-52), who in the face of every obstacle to communication with Jesus manages to contact him personally and by that means, by his faith, is made whole (10:52). In Nazareth Jesus is unable to perform any mighty good deeds because of the unbelief of the inhabitants (Mk. 6:5-6, although Mt. 13:58 tempers the picture of universal unbelief). This seems to be a secondary account, but it is consistent with the theme of a relationship between miracles and faith. It does not mean that miracles presuppose faith. The question is not whether the Nazarenes were unconvinced that Jesus really did have the power to work miracles; but they turned away from him because his power was attributed to a demon (see 6:2b-6). In fact, the people of Nazareth did believe that Jesus had power to perform miracles, but the miracles they were asking for did not demand *metanoia* or imply a call to fellowship with God (see Mt. 4:5-6; Jn. 6: 14-15). The relationship between faith and miracle as Jesus intended it to be is most clearly in evidence here: the mighty works are part of Jesus' mission to Israel, to bring people to faith in God. The point of Jesus' whole ministry is to be the one who brings God's help, who proffers salvation; when this is not recognized his whole mission is misinterpreted, the kingdom of God and the works of that kingdom are misunderstood; they only reach people through faith. Jesus' mission to Israel is a summons to faith.

This is highlighted by the faith of a non-Jewish woman (Mt. 15: 21-28,
[197] parallel in Mk. 7:24-30), who seeks the help of Israel's God via Jesus. Matthew drives home the point that Jesus' earthly mission is and remains only for Jews (Mt. 15:23,24,26) and is not meant for 'the dogs', that is, the gentiles; whereupon the heathen woman affirms her faith in Israel's God disarmingly, saying that 'even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table' (15:27). Here (in a secondary text) faith is expressed in God, whose salvation is

first for Israel but thereafter for gentiles as well. To this Jesus replies: 'Woman, great is your faith.' He, the one sent to Israel, acknowledges this faith. The Syro-Phoenician woman has what should be found in Israel: faith in Jesus as God's emissary to Israel. That is faith in Jesus prior to Easter. And it need not be anything more. For we shall see in a later chapter that Jesus' earthly mission is that of the son of David to Israel: only after the resurrection is he revealed by God as the universal Christ. Consistent with an early credal recognition of the earthly Jesus as the Solomonic son of David, sent exclusively to Israel, is the fact that in many miracle stories that refer to faith and miracles Jesus is deliberately called son of David (Mt. 15:21-28; Mt. 12:23-24; 9:27, 33-34; 20:30; Mk. 10:47-48) – in a post-Easter context, of course, but reflecting the historical motivation, namely to speak about Jesus' life here on earth without substantially retouching the picture in light of his exaltation. As son of David Jesus is sent to Israel, the fulfilment of Israel's expectations (Mt. 15:22; 21:9,15).[16] The faith that Jesus expects from Israel during his earthly life is, in the last analysis, that people should believe in him as an (end-time) emissary from God, faith in the person of the one who would convert Israel to God. Only in that perspective Jesus' mighty acts of goodness acquire their proper meaning and purpose. This becomes more obvious in secondary texts which simply define trust in the person of Jesus (as it appears more generally in primary texts) more clearly. Whether faith is mentioned before the miracle (Mk. 2:5; 5:36; 7:29; 9:23; Mt. 8:13; 9:29; 15:28) or after it (Mk. **5**:34; Lk. 7:50; 17:19) makes no difference; for at this point it is not a question of belief on the part of 'followers of Jesus', but of a (first) live encounter with Jesus. This is meant to offer salvation from God, engendering faith.

Distinct from this whole group of texts, therefore, there is another group which speaks of 'faith' and 'little faith' (*oligopistia*) in connection with the attitude of Jesus' actual disciples, a notion particularly common in Matthew (Mt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). These passages presuppose habitual fellowship with Jesus, grounded in faith which, prior to his death, is constantly deficient [198] or lacking (Mk. 11:23, parallels in Mt. 21:21; Mt. 17:20; Lk. 17:6; Mk. 4:35-41). The significance of the term 'faith' is not altered, but the words are set in a different semantic context.[17] Linguistic signals in the text suggest that any miracles recounted in this context – the stilling of the storm being a prime example (Mk. 4:35-41) – have a different purpose from miracles reported, at least partly, because of historical interest in Jesus of Nazareth. The point of the story is: 'Why are you so afraid' How is it possible that you still have no faith?' (Mk. 4:40). It concerns the disciples' already established faith, which prior to

[16] G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit. Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthaüs* (FRLANT, 82) (Göttingen 1966), 118-119; Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 113-134.
[17] Roloff, l.c., 164.

Easter keeps faltering. They have been with Jesus such a long time, yet they still don't realize that they have nothing to fear, even when their beloved master sleeps through a storm! The miracle is not even necessary, they should have known better from their association with Jesus. After all, this is not their first contact with Jesus, as is the case in almost all the actual miracle stories; they are people who have already formed a community of faith with Jesus. 'Do you not care if we perish?' (Mk. 4:38) assumes this mutual bond of faith. But the disciples are indeed short-sighted; hence the (Jewish) term 'you of little faith',[18] that is, not consistently trusting in their communion with their master. The sleeping Jesus' behaviour at that moment arouses no confidence at all in the disciples (as opposed to the faith/miracle issue). The narrated miracle dismisses the doubt of people who have a relationship of faith with Jesus. Genuine faith makes the miracle superfluous; and that is the point of the story (whatever the historical background may have been which occasioned this religious teaching). Even so, this pre-Easter faith is faith in Jesus of Nazareth, guarantor of God's saving nearness. Faith means accepting that a new fellowship with God is proffered in Jesus even during Jesus' earthly life, as is clear from Mk. 11:23; Mt. 17:20; Lk. 17:6. If the disciples' faith, albeit 'as small as a mustard seed' (Mt. 17:20), is indeed faith, it can move mountains. This has nothing to do with the miraculous power to curse a fig tree or with strong faith that works 'miracles'. The miracle here lies much deeper: it points to the miracle of God's grace, in which we can trust always. The withered fig tree is a prophecy in action: an image of God's coming judgment on Israel or on Jerusalem. But: 'Have faith in God' (Mk. 11:22); in the face of approaching
[199] judgment the disciples must continue to rely on God's help. That is the original meaning of this piece of tradition, which Mark set in the context of prayer.[19]

Likewise the story of Peter walking on the water towards Jesus and sinking through lack of faith is not in the perspective of miraculous deeds but of Jesus' (and the church's) protest against want of faith on the part of *Jesus' disciples*, who should know better (Mt. 14:18-32, from a source peculiar to Matthew). Instances such as the withered fig tree and the stilling of the storm in particular are not meant to engender faith (as in the case of a real miracle), but to expose the inconsistency of such little faith when there is an already established trust relationship with Jesus. No less typical is the story of the loaves and fishes: despite all the revisions (doublets), according to Mark it is always the doubting disciples who do not know how Jesus will be able to feed such a multitude (Mk. 6:37; 8:4).

Later, at the time of his arrest, when the disciples' faith wavered and they panicked and deserted their master, those pre-Easter memories of the

[18] Strack-Billerbeck, I, 438-439.
[19] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 168.

significance of the long-standing trust relationship with Jesus of Nazareth, in which the impossible is shown to be possible, were to play a major role in their return to Jesus as *metanoia* to the Christ. For it is noteworthy that the pre-Easter 'faith' (*pistis* and *pisteuein*) in all the synoptic texts, however much it may involve an abiding or momentary and fleeting encounter with the person of Jesus (except for one passage overlaid with a post-Easter interpretation, Mt. 18:6), is never referred to as 'faith *in* Jesus', in the sense of *pisteuein eis*: in the New Testament that is a post- Easter reality.[20] The task of the earthly Jesus was to inspire unconditional faith in God, albeit in relation to people who came into transient or prolonged contact with him. After Easter the church, conscious of the distance between then and its present faith in the exalted Lord, continues to respect this difference in its account of the gospel, despite its reworking of the texts. This shows the church reflecting on the significance of Jesus' earthly life prior to Easter. In contrast to the post-Easter miracles in the church – comforting signs of the exalted Lord working for the good of those who already believed – the marvellous and powerful acts of the earthly Jesus were an offer of faith; the synoptic writers, in spite of their post-Easter situation, remain conscious of this distinction. It reveals their historical concern with the proper significance of the earthly Jesus: he offered people God's help and fellowship with God. At the same time the historical consideration itself reflects a christological concern: who is this Jesus, who is able to extend God's [200] help to people, this man who can arouse people's faith? In his earthly life Jesus shows himself to be the one who, through his ministry, summons people to faith in God. That is the point and purpose of Jesus' mighty deeds.

B. JESUS' LIBERATING AND JOYOUS DEALINGS WITH PEOPLE: TABLE FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS

Literature. G. Braumann, 'Die Schuldner und die Sünderin, Lc. 7:36-50', NTS 10 (1963-1964), 487-493; J. Delobel, 'L'onction par la pécher-esse', ETL 42 (1966), 415-475; H. Drexler, 'Die grosse Sünderin Lk. 7:36-50', ZNW 59 (1968), 159-173; R. Feneberg, *Christliche Passafeier und Abendmahl* (Munich 1971); A. Heising, *Die Botschaft der Brotvermehrung (*Stuttgart 1966); O. Hofius, *Jesu Tischgemeinschaft mit dem Sündern (*Stuttgart 1967); B. van Iersel, 'La vocation de Lévi (Mk. 2:13-17; Mt. 9:9-13; Lk. 5:27-32)', *De Jésus aux Évangiles*, II (Gembloux 1967), 212-232; 'Die wunderbare Speisung und das Abendmahl', NovT 7 (1964-1965), 167-194; J. Jeremias, 'Zöllner und Sünder', ZNW 30 (1931), 293-300; K. Kertelge, 'Die Vollmacht des Menschensohnes zur Sündenvergebung (Mk. 2:10)', *Orientierung an Jesus* (Freiburg 1973), 205-213; R. Pesch, 'Das Zöllnergastmahl

[20] L.c., 172.

(Mk. 2:15-17)', *Mélanges Bibliques, offertes au R.P.B. Rigaux* (Gembloux 1970), 63-87; 'Lévi-Matthäus (Mk. 2:14; Mt. 9:9; 10:3)', ZNW 59 (1968), 40-56; J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma*, 223-269; L. Schrottroff, 'Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn', ZThK 68 (1971), 27-52; H. Thyen, *Studien zur Sündenvergebmg im Neuen Testament und seinen alttestamentlichen und jüdischen Voraussetzungen* (Göttingen 1970); A. Vögtle, 'Die Einladung zum grossen Gastmahl und zum königlichen Hochzeitsmahl', *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (Düsseldorf 1971), 171-218; U. Wilckens, 'Vergebung fur die Sünderin (Lk. 7:36-50)', *Orientierung an Jesus*, loc. cit., 394-422.

It is apparent from his amazing acts of power how the concrete manifestation of Jesus, his presence with and approach to people – his followers or those who remained 'outsiders' – brought them wellbeing and liberation. Jesus' attitude towards the Law and its Judaic, especially Aramaic, interpretation likewise shows that, in freeing the person, he gives the person back to himself in joyous commitment to the living God. But because Jesus perceives 'the Law' as a
[201] disclosure of God's will for mankind, this aspect of his liberating presence among people has to be treated in the context of his relationship with the Father precisely as a liberating attitude towards mankind. The next stage of our enquiry concerns Jesus' general contacts with people in the ordinary affairs of life, eating and drinking together, especially his going in search of 'the lost' and offering table fellowship to outcasts, tax collectors and sinners.

The best approach to this facet of Jesus' life on earth, it seems to me, is a particular *memory* of the disciples which was embedded firmly in the Christian tradition at an early stage, under the theme of the disciples' not fasting in the living presence of Jesus (Mk. 2:18-22; with variations in Mt. 9:14-17; Lk. 5:33-39).[21] In fact, this indirectly discloses the secret of what was experienced by the disciples who were Jesus' followers during his lifetime when they ate and drank in his company.

(a) Existential impossibility of mourning in Jesus' presence: the non-fasting of his disciples

Mk. 2:18-22 in particular structures the story so that – from the history of this

[21] This pericope is undoubtedly interpreted by the commentators in a variety of ways, according to whether they see the whole New Testament as determined by post-Easter situations within the church or whether they are concerned with history in the early Christian traditions (albeit in a kerygmatic situation). See H.J. Ebeling, 'Die Fastenfrage Mk. 2:18-22', in ThStKr 108 (1937-1938), 387ff; R. Bultmann, *Tradition,* 13-14; E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Göttingen 1967), ch. 1; A. Kee, 'The question about fasting', in NovT 11 (1969), 161-173; G. Braumann, 'An jenem Tag, Mc. 2:20', in NovT 6 (1963), 264-267. Personally I find J. Roloff's line of argument in particular (insofar as this question admits of any such possibility) makes convincing sense, in *Das Kerygma,* 223-237. His position is very different from that of, e.g., G. Schille. *Das vorsynoptische Judenchristentum* (Berlin 1970), 43-46, and 'Was ist ein Logion?', in ZNT 61 (1970), 177-182.

text's origins – the memory of Jesus' living presence, awakening joy and freeing his disciples, is still palpable in the composition. The text reads as follows:

18-19a: 'Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?

19b: As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20: The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

21-22: No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins."'

After Easter Christians remembered Jesus' reaction to the strictly ascetic impression John the Baptist had made on his contemporaries, whereas Jesus created the impression of being 'an eater and drinker' (Mk. 2:16) and, even more shocking, someone who broke the Law by eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners (Mk. 2:16). To avoid having to listen to either John or Jesus, people played the one prophet off against the other. The Matthean gospel puts it pertinently. It reads: 'It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates: "We piped to you and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say: "He has a demon"; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say: "Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"' That passage, Mt. 11:16-18, captures the issue precisely. It was the freedom exercised by Jesus and his disciples in their whole attitude to life that is disputed – not so much the question of fasting or not fasting as a minor casuistic, structural problem for the church, as so many commentaries would suggest. It goes much deeper. [202]

To this allegation Jesus' reply is brief and to the point: friends (or guests) of the bridegroom do not fast while the bridegroom is with them (Mk. 2:19a). In Western terms, at a wedding banquet one doesn't abstain, everyone is there to feast. Of course. Yet Jesus' retort is not so banal or obvious – for the simple reason that what is at issue is not a wedding banquet. Admittedly his reply is based on the notion of an ordinary experience that everybody takes for granted: one doesn't fast at wedding banquets. There is more to it than that,

however.

Nor is this gospel pericope meant to indicate that Jesus fundamentally rejected the Jewish practice of fasting, whether obligatory or voluntary. Jesus nowhere criticizes John's disciples for fasting; and he certainly honoured the reasons for the temple, the sabbath rest, the synagogue and even the Jewish days of fasting (see below). In fact, Jesus saw the Law as a token of God's goodwill and compassion with the Jews – for their salvation, not for their undoing. This is a first clear indication. Jesus established that people often hide behind the letter of the Law in order to defeat its deepest purpose: divine compassion with people. In practice the Law and the sabbath had been divorced from their real purpose and turned into an intolerable, crushing
[203] burden for ordinary people. Jesus sees the legal obligations in light of God's mindfulness of mankind. Law should be a manifestation of God's mercy.

Against this background the good news, which Jesus is, immediately becomes plain: in light of the Law the concrete person of Jesus appears as a manifestation of God's mercy, at all events for those prepared to accept the close and helping presence of God in the life and conduct of Jesus (Mt. 13:11). Whoever is not ready for this, the neutral onlooker or the one who believes only in the Law, fails to see that saving presence; on the contrary such a person sees only the incomprehensible (Mk. 4:11-12), even exasperating (Mk. 6:2-3; see Mt. 11:6; 15:12) behaviour of Jesus and his followers in deviating from the Law.

The question raised was: do you trust, yes or no? It is a decision for or against Jesus. Those who gave him their trust did so out of a conviction that God's concern for human beings was manifested in Jesus. Hence if Jesus himself was physically with his disciples, there was every reason for those who entrusted themselves to him to rejoice. There would be no thought of fasting. Thus the point of the story is: this Jesus, palpable manifestation of God's compassion with mankind, was present in person among his disciples. That John the Baptist's disciples should fast was fair enough – nothing against it. But if Jesus' disciples should fast now, that would show disregard of the concrete situation – the presence of salvation in the living person of Jesus of Nazareth. The disciples' fellowship with Jesus was in essence a festive celebration, a banquet prepared by Jesus himself, a salvific fellowship. The time that Jesus spent among people who – even though not yet understanding, but nonetheless unconditionally – enthusiastically followed him was a very special time. So his presence became a living dispensation from fasting or mourning.

It is evident from this that Jesus never lived by abstractions or general norms: he always saw people in their concrete situation. That is why he was able to surprise them and take them unawares with his profound humanness. Although his disciples did not always understand precisely what he was

getting at, they were certainly carried away by their master, Jesus – they simply adored him because they knew: in him we are receiving a gift, a present from God. When thus taken up with someone, while his living presence is with you, you are not going to fast and weep and play an ascetic role. Remarkably, this fasting pericope does not say that Jesus himself did not fast; it refers to an [204] accusation made against Jesus' disciples (verse 18). Jesus defended their conduct and justified it when he said: what do you expect, they have a sense of wellbeing and happiness! That is a clear provocation and an invitation to acknowledge or reject him as a gift from God – but faced with a provocation like that one is forced to take sides. Like every gospel story, it hinges on the question, 'But you, who do you say that I am?' Whereas John's call to conversion was essentially bound up with ascetic, penitential practices, Jesus' call seems to be fundamentally connected with communion at table, eating and drinking together with Jesus, an event in which Jesus' disciples could actually experience the eschatological, the crucial and definitive outreach of God's mercy as already present. To believe in Jesus is to put one's trust gladly in God; that is no occasion for fasting. Judging by the expressions used in the pericope, there is no doubt that these recollections were touched up in light of the Easter experiences, but they remain historically faithful memories of joyful association with Jesus.

But after his death Jesus' disciples expressed their misgiving: where do we find ourselves now that he has been taken from us? This is what Mark tries to make clear in 2:19b-20. It brings out Mark's view (repeatedly mentioned already) as distinct from other early Christian interpretations. Mark's community, recalling and faithfully passing on these sayings of Jesus after his death, saw itself faced with a serious problem. It realized that now that Jesus was dead convivial fellowship and companionship with the living Jesus was no longer possible. What now? Hence the later interpolation of verses 19b and 20; they are a sort of retrospective musing on the part of Mark's community. This Christian group applied Jesus' earlier sayings to its own new situation, created by his absence. It spontaneously augmented his words and said: 'As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.' These are no longer Jesus' own words but those of Christians reflecting on them now that Jesus was gone. That is movingly evident from the way they speak about the old memories of the disciples' fellowship with Jesus in his lifetime. These Christians keenly experienced the difference between now and then. The tone of the passage is heartrending: when Jesus was still here – that's what it says – they could not fast, they were not capable of doing that because of his living presence. The non-fasting of the disciples at that time was in no way a kind of legal dispensation from fasting, but an existential

impossibility to do otherwise. These words reveal something of the
[205] enchantment and power exercised on them by the living Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian tradition has preserved this memory meticulously; for without that spell-binding quality, Christianity would never have become a fact of history.

But there is also the initial reaction, the other side of the coin. For then comes the sober reflection: in our situation now, this Jesus has been removed from among us. Jesus is dead. Now we may fast, now we may weep – for in biblical terms that is one and the same thing.

The situation is clearly defined in these verses by the contrast: joy and grief, presence and absence. In this passage we are confronted with a community which, although believing in Jesus' resurrection, was living in the absence of its Lord, awaiting his parousia – a community which did not know the joy, for instance that of the Pauline churches who believed in the active presence of the ascended Jesus Christ (see also Acts 2:46), but which, although assisted by the Spirit, was awaiting in fasting, sorrowing and suffering his speedy and joyous return.[22] The fact that Jesus had been removed from their midst was not to be ignored. They did indeed long ardently for his return; but meanwhile they felt themselves orphaned, desolate and sorrowfully fasting.

Yet verse 20 does not point to any rule in the church about fasting. There is a deeper reason; just as the disciples were unable to fast when Jesus was still with them – how could they? – so now they must indeed fast, out of grief: in other words, they cannot eat for sorrow. That is manifestly the tenor of verses 19b and 20.

And yet in this mournful reverie an element of new, joyful hope glows. Looking back on the fellowship with Jesus in the days when he was still alive opened up a prospect of the coming, still awaited fellowship with the returning Christ. Strikingly, whereas in the preceding, earlier reminiscences the expressions 'the bridegroom' and 'the wedding banquet' were only images and similes, now – in the second, retrospective version – they are no longer analogies: here Jesus is, christologically, 'the bridegroom' of the church. He is and remains the bridegroom, even now (see Mt. 25:1-13; Rev. 22:17; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:21-33), although removed from human history. He will return.

The rest of Mark's fasting pericope[23] is not directly relevant to the present argument. It should be noted, however, that Jesus' real presence among men – for his contemporaries, during his days on earth; for Christians, the hope of

[22] See Weeden, *Mark-traditions* (thesis of the book). Cf. Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 233, n. 107. See also Acts 1:11; Phil. 1:23; Jn. 16:16-24.

[23] The whole composition of Mk. (2:18-22) (a) presents a stereotyped line '(b) adds two new images (from the tradition, or from Mark's editing: 2:21-22), and (c) sets the whole of 2:18-22 in the context of a larger group of 'startling postures' of Jesus (2:1 3:5), concluding with: 'they... sought to get rid of Jesus' (3:6).

soon being reunited with the coming Jesus, son of man – means joy and liberation for those permitted to enjoy his presence. The Markan community *remembers* that from the time of Jesus' days on earth. Jesus showed himself then to be a man of freedom, a free man, whose sovereign freedom never worked to his own advantage but always to the benefit of others, an expression of God's free and loving outreach to men. Such disconcerting freedom from the Law and the sabbath, and yet respect for their real meaning and purpose – which in fact had been misused against God's saving purpose, hence against humanity, instead of serving man and setting him free – was a thorn in the flesh for those unwilling to see Jesus' praxis as a parable of God's helping outreach to us, unfree as we are on personal and social grounds. Such human freedom-in-the-service-of-others, intended to liberate especially those who are – in whatever respect – unfree is incompatible with what the Markan gospel calls 'the old'. We might say it is incompatible with the ordinary, officially 'normal' history of suffering of the masses, which their leaders neither noticed nor cared about. Indeed, by way of a minor, as it were marginal incident in the life of Jesus – the fact that his disciples did not fast – Mark manages to portray the new order manifested in Jesus in masterly fashion, at once true to Jesus and yet extremely personal. Mark's message is that with Jesus history has been radically revolutionized: a stumbling-block to those who are scandalized by him, but salvation for those who commit themselves trustingly to the mystery of this man, Jesus. [206]

The non-fasting of Jesus' disciples while he was present with them indirectly highlights the positive meaning of their table fellowship with the earthly Jesus; and this is important in the life of Jesus of Nazareth – so much so that it gave rise to legends. Here legend is manifestly the surest guarantee of the memory of the disciples' day-to-day intercourse with Jesus.

(b) Jesus' liberating table fellowship with his circle and with 'outcasts', tax collectors and sinners

(i) *Eschatological messenger of God's openness towards sinners*

In no fewer than four traditions we hear of Jesus consorting and even (forbidden to Jews) sharing a meal with sinners;[24] there are also many parables telling about going in search of what has been lost and, finally, of God's kingdom being promised 'to tax collectors and prostitutes' (Mt. 21:31b) – passages in which the Christian community is expressing realistically what these people had experienced of Jesus' dealings with sinners. The memory of [207]

[24] Markan tradition: Mk. 2:15-17, pl. Lk. 15:2; Q tradition: Lk. 15:4-10, pl Mt.; SL (peculiar to Luke): Lk. 7:36-50; 15:11-32; 19:1-10; SM (peculiar to Matthew): Mt. 20:1-15. See also Lk. 11:19, pl. Then too the Johannine tradition: Jn: 4:7-42.

that impression is captured most vividly in the story (albeit reworked by the church and even liturgically) in Lk. 7:36-50 (proper to Luke) about the 'woman who was a great sinner' – perhaps an instance where, besides Jesus' telling of a parable, we are also given the concrete circumstances that prompted him to tell it.[25] A Pharisee had invited Jesus to a meal (apparently because of his fame as a prophet). 'And behold', a woman held officially to be of ill repute (thought with good reason to be a prostitute) hears that Jesus is there; she comes up to him, washes his feet with her tears, dries them with her hair and kisses his feet (also anointing them with oil). It dismays the Pharisee to see how Jesus dares to let himself be touched by a sinful woman; such a man cannot be a prophet. It occurs to the Pharisee that Jesus does not realize he is dealing with a sinful woman; if he did, he would certainly rebuff her – so he has no prophetic gifts. But the point of Luke's story is that the Pharisee 'thought to himself', he did not speak out, and as he was talking Jesus divined his secret thought and mentioned, almost in passing, that of course he knew he was dealing with such a woman and was prepared nonetheless to submit to the washing. That is the point. And then Jesus tells a parable: 'A certain creditor had two debtors ...' (Lk. 7:41-43). He absolved both of them from their debt, the greater and the lesser. 'Now which of them will love him more?' (7:42). 'Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much' (7:47). Only at this point in the Lukan story does it appear that the woman has fulfilled the duties of the host, who (somewhat improbably!) neglected them; and that she did so unstintingly – being in that respect like the debtor who had had the greater debt forgiven him: thus she loves all the more. This makes the actual host, who had skimped on his duties, the debtor who had had the lesser debt remitted. The Pharisee's attitude here, as in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Lk. 18:9-14) – despite his legally correct aloofness from sinners – turns out to be negative when compared with the behaviour of the sinful woman. 'Your faith has saved you' (7:50). Faith is suddenly associated with forgiveness of sins, thus affirming once again (see above: 'faith and miracles') that faith entails an attitude of *metanoia* towards the (saving) fellowship offered by Jesus. The woman's display of love and the forgiveness promised by Jesus are
[208] explicable in the context of the saving fellowship brought about by this event. Jesus's presence itself is an offer of saving fellowship, which is grasped in faith by the sinful woman. Jesus let the woman do what she was doing, not because he failed to realize that she was a sinner but for that very reason: to open up forgiving communion with a sinful person. That was what prompted the

[25] Thus J. Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Göttingen 1965[7]), 126-127. The church's revision for liturgical purposes is discussed from his own standpoint by U. Wilckens, 'Vergebung für die Sünderin', in *Orientierung an Jesus* (Freiburg 1973), 394-424, who also accepts a historical basis (404). A survey of the exegetical positions up to 1966 is provided by J. Delobel, 'L'onction par la pécheresse', in ETL 42 (1966), 415-475.

woman's prodigal devotion. Exegetes disagree fiercely – also on confessional lines – whether the woman's faith and love are a consequence of or a condition for Jesus' forgiveness. Luke's account is indeed complicated by contamination from another tradition – that of Jesus' anointment Jesus by a woman (Mk. 14:3-9). This anointment is not part of the tradition on which Lk. 7:35-50 is based (it does not actually fit in with it). Luke 7:44-46 also appears to be secondary,[26] in view of the introduction of the anointing incident from Mk. 14. Luke himself wants to highlight the contrast between the Pharisee and the sinful woman, but according to the parable's particular tenor the difference in remission of (a great or a small) debt results in greater love by the person who has had the greater debt forgiven. The measure of forgiveness is the measure of the responding love, not vice versa. Both are forgiven everything, without limit; therefore the greatest sinner has the greatest love. That is the shock effect of the parable (also see the parable of the workers in the vineyard, Mt. 20:14) – and that is said in view of the Pharisee's implacable legalism. The sinful woman recognizes the kingdom of God in Jesus, which is precisely what the Pharisee does not do. So she has the greater love; for the least in the kingdom of God is even greater than John the Baptist! Letting Jesus convert her to God makes this woman greater than the Pharisee, who is indeed law abiding and only slightly in debt with God (see the parable of the elder brother of the prodigal son, Lk. 15:12-32, and of the Pharisee and the publican, Lk. 18:9-14; cf. also the parable of the two sons, Mt. 21:28-31). It may fairly be said (on the strength of Jewish parallels) that this narrative belongs in the Christian tradition as a 'conversion story' (and acquired its *Sitz* in the liturgy of Christian baptism), but in substance its source of inspiration is Jesus' saving interaction with sinners.

The second passage in which – after Easter – the authority to forgive sins is expressly attributed to Jesus is Mk. 2:10: 'The son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins' (parallels in Mt 9:6,8 and Lk. 5:20-26). Neither the Danielic tradition of the son of man, which does mention his 'plenary power' (*exousia*), [209] nor the subsequent Jewish apocalyptic tradition of the son of man ascribes the power to forgive sin to him. In Judaism God alone can forgive sins, although according to the Jewish 'threshold liturgy' the high priest may indeed pronounce somebody 'free from sin' in the sense of judging him worthy to take a front seat in the temple. Forgiveness of sin is God's exclusive prerogative. Even in the Jewish tradition of messianic expectation, while the 'end-time' messiah may intercede with God on the sinner's behalf, he cannot forgive sins.[27] To ascribe that sort of authority to a human being is blasphemous (Mk.

[26] Thus Wilckens, l.c., 399; also Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 162, n. 204, who moreover thinks it unlikely that a law-abiding Pharisee would have ignored his obligations as a host.
[27] Strack-Billerbeck, I, 495.

2:7; Lk. 5:21; Mt. 9:3). Thus the fact that after Easter Jews – which the first Christians were – should ascribe the power to forgive sins to Jesus cannot be explained on the basis of existing Jewish models (in this respect there are none), but rather (if it is not a post-Easter ideology) from actual facts in the life of the historical Jesus himself: his liberating dealings with sinners.

For both Jews and Jewish Christians the remission of sins is an eschatological act of God. In the earliest, purely eschatological interpretation of Jesus as the coming son of man some Christians still appear to regard redemption and remission of sins as a purely eschatological event. The baptism of John, too (according to Mk. 1:4), did not entail forgiveness of sins, but established a link between this act of *metanoia* and eschatological indemnity against God's wrath (or eschatological deliverance).[28] In addition, in the Lord's Prayer from the earliest Q stratum (Lk. 11:1-4; Mt. 6:9-13) forgiveness of sins is petitioned as a coming eschatological event.[29] That in itself tells us that there are only two pieces of early Christian tradition which explicitly refer to the earthly Jesus forgiving of sins (Mk, 2:10 and Lk. 7:36-50). It indicates that explicit recognition – however early – of Jesus' authority to forgive sins during his earthly life presupposes explicit acknowledgment of the risen Jesus as the coming eschatological son of man (first Aramaic Judaeo-Christian phase) and (in a second Greek Judaeo-Christian phase) the identification of the earthly Jesus with the coming son of man. Thus in Mk. 2:10 an explicit awareness surfaces that the eschatological remission of sins by God was already operative in the earthly Jesus himself as the eschatological son of man; this explicates the deepest meaning of Jesus' historical association with sinners after Easter, and even then with a certain reservation: the son of man has power to forgive sins. This is a pre-Markan tradition, in which 'the son of man' has already become a
[210] christological title,[30] with exclusively eschatological significance in the earliest stratum, afterwards applied to the earthly Jesus as well. Mk. 2:10 (cf. 2:28) already attests this. That Jesus 'came not to call the righteous but sinners' (Mk. 2:17) is thus based on historical recollections of Jesus' liberating dealings with sinners, the eschatological character of which was expressly recognized later on.

It is noteworthy, however, that except for Mk. 2:10 and 2:18 – the son of man has authority to forgive sins; and the son of man is Lord of the sabbath – the evangelist only begins using 'son of man' as a separate title in Mk. 8:31, the time when Jesus withdrew from the multitude to concentrate on instructing the disciples. This shows on the one hand that Mark found the term 'son of man' as an existing christological title (in 2:10 and 2:18) in his tradition, and on

[28] R. Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich,* 59.
[29] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 91-92.
[30] Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 265-267; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 46; Kertelge, in *Orientierung an Jesus,* l.c., 211.

the other that he regarded 'son of man' to be a (christological) title understood by the disciples, but not by Jesus' opponents (insofar as the title is applied to the earthly Jesus). In this sense, even in Mk. 2:10, the implication of the Jesus saying about the son of man's power to forgive sins as used in Mark's narrative remains concealed from Jesus' opponents. God's eschatological power to forgive sins is hidden from Jesus' antagonists, but is already visibly at work in the earthly Jesus in the eyes of believers – this is what Mk. 2:10 seeks to make clear.

The church's acknowledgment of Jesus' power to forgive sins, though featuring in only two pericopes in the synoptic gospels, is merely translating into the language of the church what actually occurred in Jesus' association with sinners. This is most clearly demonstrated in Mark's account of a dinner party for tax collectors attended by Jesus at the house of the tax collector Levi, son of Alpheus (Mk. 2:15-17; see Mt. 9:10-13; Lk. 5:29-32). The history of the origin of Mk. 2:15-17 is that it is based on a historical recollection of an actual event in Jesus' earthly life, whereupon it passed though an initial development into an orally transmitted Jesus logion, an early collection of what are exegetically known as Jesus' 'controversies' with his opponents, and an updating by the church of this tradition in the pre-Markan tradition, until it was finally incorporated by the Markan redactor into his gospel with a quite specific theological purpose.[31] There is no need to substantiate this complex, yet plausible and transparently clear process here; what concerns us is the outcome.

The earliest phase of the tradition stems from a historical event. A number of [211]
tax collectors threw a party,[32] to which Jesus was invited (thus he was not himself the host), at the home of Levi, the son of Alpheus (one of the linguistic signals, at any rate in a 'controversy', pointing to a historical reminiscence). This came to the ears of scribes who were Pharisees, in Galilee those suitably empowered to monitor observance of the rules governing purity, also as regards consorting with sinners.[33] Naturally they objected to Jesus' behaviour in this instance. The earliest phase of the tradition went more or less as follows: 'And it happened that Jesus was a guest in the house of Levi, son of Alpheus, and a large number of tax collectors were staying *with him* [*Levi*]' (verse 15).

[31] This pericope has been analysed with unusual thoroughness in two studies: B. van Iersel, 'La vocation de Levi', l.c. (1967) and R. Pesch, 'Das Zöllnergastmahl' (1970), l.c. The primary difference (along with its consequences) between the two studies is that van Iersel sees Mk. 2:15 as a Markan redaction (225-6), while Pesch considers it to be a pre-Markan tradition.

[32] Tax collectors of the period worked in groups, collecting dues and rents; historically, therefore, their sharing dinner together is quite plausible.

[33] A unique expression in Mark, which again points to concrete historical circumstances. 'Scribes of the Pharisees' are to be sought mainly in Galilee, where they superintended the synagogues and the laws regarding purity, with respect to 'sinners', for instance

'The Pharisaic scribes who saw him dining with tax collectors said to us: "He is eating with sinners"'(verse 16); 'Jesus heard of this and said to them: I have not come to call the righteous but sinners' (verse 17ac).[34] There the concrete, historical incident as reported by the disciples is still discernible in the tradition that handed down this memory. B. van Iersel, as also R. Pesch, regard Mk. 2:17c as an authentic Jesus saying.[35] 'I have come to call...': calling here refers to the task of the faithful servant who conveys the host's invitation to his invited guests (see the parable of the reluctant wedding guests above). Although himself a guest of Levi's, Jesus sees sharing a meal with a bunch of tax collectors in light of his role as God's 'eschatological messenger', the one who proclaims the imminent approach of God's lordship and reign, and on God's behalf brings tax collectors (i.e. sinners) the invitation to the great eschatological feast of fellowship with God (Mt. 22:1-14; Lk. 14:16-24). The contrast in Mk. 2:17c is between 'the righteous' (*sadikim*) and 'sinners' – a Judaic contrast (since Christians came to regard themselves as 'the righteous' in a later phase of the early Christian tradition,[36] this logion could hardly have been formulated in that subsequent phase). The paired concepts, 'righteous' and 'sinners', occur in other layers of the Jesus tradition as well (Lk. 18:9-13; Lk. 15:7). The *sadikim* or righteous are by no means excluded from the divine invitation brought by the eschatological messenger; Jesus' intention is to include those who were excluded by the Pharisees because of the prescriptions for ritual cleanness (no intercourse with sinners). From the viewpoint of official Judaic piety Jesus degraded himself by eating with tax collectors. His self-defence was that it is precisely to sinners, those beyond the pale, that the invitation to communication must be extended: the sinners must be invited to
[212] God's table and his fellowship with human beings in order to bring them out of their isolation. The sheep that is lost and isolated from the flock must be sought out (Lk. 15:1-8; 19:10; Mt. 9:36; 10:6; 15:24). Jesus, who in his earthly life was called to Israel in order to gather all Israel together under the good shepherd, Israel's God, knew (for that very reason) that he was sent especially to sinners, to outcasts.

What turns out, therefore, to be the oldest core of what Mk. 2:15-17 is telling us – and it goes back to Jesus himself – is Jesus' special care for sinners, firm in the conviction and knowledge that he was sent to bring to outcasts, and to

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[34] R. Pesch, l.c., 73.

[35] The *'èlthon'*-formula (in the first person: 'I have come in order to') – in contrast to the *'èthen'* form ('he has come to') – does not *per se* indicate a retrospective look at the total life of Jesus after his death, but renders a Hebrew word meaning: 'to intend, to will, to be instructed to' or 'I must', 'I have to...'; the Semitism is reinforced by the 'dialectical negation': '... come not for the righteous but for sinners' (R. Pesch, l.c., 79; B. van Iersel, l.c., 223-224). See also M. Black, in *The Expository Times,* 81 (1970), 115-18; cf. in the opposite sense Käsemann, in *Besinnungen,* II, 82-104.

[36] Mt. 10:41; 13:43,49; Lk. 14:14; Rom. 2:13; Jam. 5:16; 1 Jn. 3:7.

them in particular, the message of restored communication with God and with other human beings: in so doing he was actually bringing the message of God's coming reign. The very fact that Jesus sought them out, offering them his fellowship, broke down their isolation and gave sinners the chance 'to repent and be converted', the possibility of hearing the invitation from the kingdom of God, first and foremost in actual fact.[37] Hence the Christian community in no way distorted its picture of his life on earth when it explicitly ascribed the authority to forgive sins to the earthly Jesus (see above).

Mark now inserts into this block of controversies (2:1-3:6) the scene where Levi is called to become a disciple of Jesus (Mk. 2:13-14). Thus in the Markan gospel Mk. 2:1-3 is placed in the magnificent perspective of Jesus' freedom 'to do good' (Mk. 3:4). Jesus' contact with the sinner Levi led to the man's *metanoia*; he was converted to discipleship. (Hence solidarity with sinners is also part of the mandate given to Jesus' disciples.) This solidarity Jesus had with sinners, his contact with sinful people aimed at opening up communication with God and with human beings, indeed entailed 'being delivered into the hands of sinners'; such solidarity, mingling with sinners, was for their salvation: Jesus intended it to open up communication. To Mark his being delivered into the hands of sinners (Mk. 9:31 with 14:41) is also the real import of Jesus' death: the 'saving gift' to sinners, to mix with sinners in such a way that he himself was destroyed. From 3:6 onwards, therefore, this is what Mark declares to be the prospect. Jesus' death becomes the seal set on a life consciously directed to inviting sinners to fellowship – eschatological fellowship with God, a foretaste of which may be experienced when we extend forgiveness to our fellow men (Mk. 11:25; Mt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35).

Although reworked in the gospel narrative, both the story of Jesus' meeting with the 'woman who was a great sinner' and that of his dining with a bunch of infamous tax collectors derive from facts historically grounded in Jesus' life on earth, so we catch a glimpse of a very important facet of that life. Besides, it is consistent with both the profoundest intentions of many of his parables and [213]

[37] This ancient tradition has been 'updated' in a later but still pre-Markan one. For Christians tax collectors were not sinners; furthermore, there had arisen in the church the problem of meals shared between Jewish Christians and uncircumcised gentile Christians (R. Pesch, l.c., 82, and B. van Iersel, l.c., 218-19). For Christians, then, 'sinners' means primarily 'pagans' (Mt. 5:47; cf. Mk. 14:41, pl. Lk. 6:32ff; esp. Gal. 2:15). Meals shared between Jewish and gentile Christians had become a problem (Acts 11:1-3). Hence the formula acquired another meaning: 'tax collectors (=sinners) and sinners (=pagans)'; in the spirit of Jesus who ate with sinners (tax collectors) it was possible to appeal to *him* in the matter of sharing meals with 'pagans' (sinners) (Van Iersel, l.c., 219, n. 16; R. Pesch, l.c., 82-4). Again: in the process of editing the pre-Markan collection of disputations (2:1-3:6), the one about the physician was interpolated (Mk. 2:17b): 'those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick' *(kakôs echontes)*. The image of the doctor is conjured up naturally by the fact that within this assembled whole Jesus emerges as saviour of the sick and of sinners (Mk. 2:1-12).

mighty acts, so we are bound to conclude that Jesus' earthly praxis and ministry demonstrate the praxis of the kingdom of God, which he preached and implemented. In his earthly, historical life the eschatological praxis of the coming reign of God was already discernible in the dimension of human history here on earth. More and more insistently the idea presses upon us: in this concrete Jesus phenomenon proclamation, praxis and person seem to be inseparable. Jesus *identified* with God's cause as the cause of mankind.

(ii) *Jesus as host: a bounteous gift of God*

There is yet another aspect which allows us to penetrate even further into Jesus' fellowship with people, with sinners. So far we have dealt with cases in which Jesus was a guest, not the host. Where indeed could he – the itinerant preacher – play host but under the open sky? There is, however, a special exception: the farewell meal, for there 'he broke the bread and passed it round', that is, he himself acted as the host, who does the inviting. In these instances where his 'eating with sinners' is not in the spotlight, what stands out particularly in the recorded memories of early Christian traditions is the sheer abundance of Jesus' gifts. Although he had not a stone on which to lay his head (Mt. 8:20; Lk. 9:58), he and his disciples, and even his listeners, never lacked anything. That sparks the imagination and is conducive to the formation of legends. But legend itself reveals a historical core, without which the formation of legends is impossible.

It must have made an indelible impression; for not only do all four gospel writers have the story of the 'multiplication of the loaves' (Mk. 6:34-44; parallels Mt. 14:14-21; Lk. 9:11b-17; Mk. 8:1-9; parallels Mt. 15:32-38 with 16:5-12; Jn. 6:1-15), but some even have it in doublets (Mark and Matthew). The fact – already mentioned above – that in the Q tradition Jesus refuses to perform messianic 'manna miracles', whereas here something very like a manna miracle is reported (although only the Johannine gospel alludes to it), suggests that the miraculous feeding belongs not so much in the miracle
[214] tradition as in another corpus with different intentions. On the basis of the gospel text itself this at once gives us an indication how to interpret the story: its basic purpose is not to recount a miracle. This is suggested by the very nature of the tradition complex – not by any *a priori* bias against miracles, modern or otherwise.

The first striking element of the story of the (outdoor) fellowship meal is that Jesus himself acts the role of host: he blesses and breaks the bread, offers it and passes it round.[38] This account condenses a basic feature of Jesus' fellowship

[38] Blessing and breaking the bread and offering it to the company is, according to Jewish custom, the privilege of the 'head of table', the host. See Strack-Billerbeck, IV, 614.

during his days on earth: it focused on companionship at table. However, the historical recollection of this fellowship between Jesus and his friends while sharing a meal is partly overlaid by a post-Easter legend, so that the narrative gives the impression of relating a nature miracle. The only question to consider is whether the 'touching up' is attributable to post-Easter eucharistic celebrations and other ecclesiological situations, or to the extremely powerful, almost legendary impact that table fellowship with Jesus made on his disciples.[39] H. Lietzmann and E. Lohmeyer claim that the eucharist in the early church had a dual origin: on the one hand it is said to be grounded in the memories preserved among the earliest local Palestinian churches of the disciples' daily companionship at table with Jesus; in that case the feeding miracle is a reminiscence of those meals and also the prototype of Christians' post-Easter festive meals, to which the *anamnèsis* of Jesus' death was quite foreign; on the other hand, the actual eucharist is said to have arisen in the Hellenistic churches (Lietzmann), or (according to Lohmeyer) even earlier in Palestine (Jerusalem), on the basis of the manifestation narratives about communal meals shared by the disciples with the risen Lord (Lk. 24:30-31; 24:41-43; Acts 10: 39-41; Jn. 21:10-14).[40] These theses have been repeatedly challenged and largely refuted. Even so they contain a valid intuition, namely that besides the eucharist (and independently of it) the early church had vivid memories of fellowship at table enjoyed with the earthly Jesus; the same memories left their traces in accounts of miraculous multiplication of loaves.[41] This thesis is corroborated above all by an analysis of the recurring stories (doublets or variants of the same piece of tradition; especially Mk. 6:34-44 and 8:1-9). The two stories have the same structure: (a) conversation with the disciples (6:35-38 and 8:1-5); (b) preparation for the meal by Jesus (6:39-41 and 8:6-7); (c) the meal and gathering of the leftovers (6:42-44 and 8:8-9). The fundamental difference between the two stories is, firstly, the dire need of [215] people who had followed Jesus into the wilderness and had nothing to eat (8:1-9), while in 6:34-38 there is no acute need of any sort and food could easily have been fetched from the village (6:36). But Jesus' primary purpose is to show that he wants to act as host himself and to offer the people a fellowship meal. The pre-Markan verse (Mk. 6:34) sets the whole pericope in the Old Testament theme of the good shepherd (Num. 27:17; Ezek. 34:5-8; though only implicitly, since there is no reference to the Old Testament). Jesus took pity on the people, who were without a leader, and proceeded himself to act as the

[39] A survey of the diverse exegetical interpretations is provided by A. Heising, *Brotvermehrung,* l.c., 56-59, n. 71 (literature there 6-7).

[40] H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl. Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Liturgie* (Bonn 1926); E. Lohmeyer, 'Vom urchristlichen Abendmahl', in ThR 9 (1937), 168-227, 273-311; 10 (1938), 81-99. See R. Feneberg, *Christliche Passafeier,* l.c., 45-59.

[41] In particular, Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* l.c., 241.

end-time shepherd sent by God (Ezek. 34:23; Jer. 23:4). Jesus' teaching (6:34b) formed the introduction to the meal that Jesus now offered the people as their host, entertaining them to a feast. The first story (Mk. 6:30-44) unambiguously renders the fellowship meal offered by Jesus himself, whereas Mk. 8:1-9 recounts the same traditional data in the guise of a miracle story: Jesus comes to the rescue of people in dire physical need.[42]

Jesus' introductory prayer is the same in both stories; it is confined to the terminology of a Jewish grace before meals and so has no eucharistic implications. In Mk. 6:41, as opposed to 8:7, the blessing of the fishes is missing; hence this account is older and closer to historical reality (side dishes are not blessed separately by Jews).[43] (Mark 8:7 suggests a Hellenistic misunderstanding of Jewish custom and so may imply, in this context, a blessing that effected the multiplication of the fishes. It is logical, therefore, that the Judaeo-Christian gospel of Matthew should drop Mark's blessing of the fishes, which makes no sense in a Judaic context.) It is no longer possible to reconstruct the historical core of the story as a whole, except in broad terms: Jesus' explicitly hosting a meal in the open air with a large crowd of adherents. This gathering definitely has eschatological significance: the dawning of a joyous time of plenty thanks to Jesus' presence. In substance the story does not stem from the church's post-Easter concern, but is the outcome of a fascinating historical memory, confirmed by Mark's interpretation of the 'miraculous multiplication of loaves' (Mk. 8:14-21). At any rate Mark did not view the event from a eucharistic angle but interpreted it as instruction of the disciples. It raises the same question as the stilling of the storm: the disciples are reproached for their lack of faith (Mk. 8:21: 'Do you not yet understand?' After the second miraculous multiplication of loaves the disciples started to squabble
[216] about the forgotten loaves!). So Mark compares them with the Pharisees and Herodians, who understood Jesus no better. Later on the disciples 'remember' (Mk. 8:18) all sorts of details about these bewildering events, but fail to grasp the point: Jesus' offer of God's salvation.[44]

The focus of the story, then, is not so much the 'marvel' itself as the marvellous abundance that prevails when Jesus offers fellowship at table. The idea of eschatological abundance (Amos 9:13) is unmistakable.

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[42] Roloff, l.c., 243.

[43] Strack-Billerbeck, IV, 614.

[44] A separate analysis of Mt., Lk. and Jn. is unnecessary for the purpose of this chapter. Suffice it to say that Matthew introduces no substantial changes, but makes the 'miraculous feeding' refer from first to last to the disciples; the people disappear into the background. John especially gives added depth to the story: in Jesus the people see the 'divine miracle worker' who satisfies physical needs in a marvellous way; they want to make him king. They have not understood 'the sign': ' o – ; Jesus was concerned with the bread of eternal life, and that is Jesus himself, the one sent by God. What matters is the Giver, not just the gift. But even here Jesus declines to see any reference to the 'manna miracle'. Jesus is himself God's end-time gift to the people. :c onwardsalso .

Besides these stories, table fellowship of the risen Lord with his disciples also features in the gospels of Luke and John (Lk. 24:28-31; Jn. 21:12-13; cf. Acts 10:41), although here we are dealing with a pre-Lukan tradition. In Acts 10:41 Luke speaks of the risen Lord eating and drinking with the twelve – circumstance not mentioned in the Lukan gospel itself. Luke 24:13-35 does not refer to any of the twelve but to those on the road to Emmaus; and in Lk. 24:36-43 Jesus does indeed eat – but 'before the eyes' of the disciples (not together with them).

The meal at Emmaus is instructive in this connection. The Emmaus disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of bread. Whereas Jesus was invited as a guest (Lk. 24:29), he himself blesses and breaks the bread: that is, he acts *as host* in the house of two strangers. That is how he is recognized. In other words, after his death Jesus renews his table fellowship with his followers; in spite of his death, and at his own initiative, he resumes communal contact. (Luke here contains no allusion to a Last Supper tradition.) The passage reminds us rather of Lk. 9:16 and 9:12: Jesus' earthly table fellowship with his disciples. The core of the Emmaus story becomes intelligible from historical memories of the significance of pre-Easter table fellowship.

In Jn. 21:1-14 historical memories of Jesus' earthly life again play an obvious role. Here a tradition about a meal shared with the risen Lord is interwoven with another about catching some fish.[45] When the second intertwined tradition is isolated, 21:12-13 follows on 21:4-9. Thus the original story goes like this: after an unsuccessful fishing trip the disciples are making their way back; from their boat they see somebody standing on the shore, watching them; they fail to recognize Jesus. On disembarking they see a small fire burning and a meal ready; Jesus invites them to eat, and they recognize him. In other words, here too Jesus is identified by the fact that he fulfils the role of host, handing [217] out bread and fish to his friends. This story, too, derives from a pre-Johannine 'manifestation' tradition centring on Galilee, though associated now with a miraculous meal. In other words, all the stories about Jesus hosting a meal refer to a tradition emanating from the vicinity of the Galilean lake. In all variants of this piece of tradition (Jn. 6:1; Mk. 6:45; 8:10) reference to the Sea of Galilee is prominent, indicating that they must be rooted in historical recollections. After Easter Jesus resumed the real-life fellowship he had shared with his disciples prior to his death.

The fact that this tradition (Lk. 24:28-31; Jn. 21:12-13) bears no recognizable relation to the tradition of the farewell meal, while there are undeniable allusions to the stories about the miraculous multiplication of the loaves, affords even better insight into the latter. To my mind J. Roloff has clearly

[45] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 259.

demonstrated that these are not secondary texts, taken (as many scholars believe) from a post-Easter, specifically eucharistic context, spliced together and projected back onto Jesus' earthly life. In a sense the miraculous multiplication of loaves veils what happened, whereas the accounts of eating with Jesus after Easter are marked by clear recognition of the Christ, when 'the eyes of the disciples were opened' (Lk. 24:31; see Jn. 21:12). The later forms of table fellowship reveal the meaning and purpose of such fellowship with Jesus during his life on earth, at the same time referring back to it. The same reference is reflected in the model stories of Jesus' miraculous feeding of the multitude. Thus the latter are based on the historical table fellowship enjoyed by the earthly Jesus and his disciples, an essential and characteristic feature of the historical Jesus. This given fact will also play an important role **in** the course of this book when we come to interpret in more detail the 'appearances' of Jesus, as they are called, which, after the panic touched off by the disciples' lack of faith, restored the broken fellowship, and so belatedly reveal the real point of their companionship with the earthly Jesus.

Finally, the gospels recount one particular instance, when on the eve of his passion Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it and offered it to his disciples; in other words, a similar table fellowship, in which Jesus himself acts as host and, face to face with his approaching death, nevertheless provides, if for the very last time, an occasion of fellowship with his disciples – all this in the context of the superabundant eschatological gift. But this historical memory will only be
[218] analysed in a later chapter on Jesus' presumption and conviction about his coming death – where, in terms of tradition history, this story belongs.

The conclusion may be brief: table fellowship, whether with notorious tax collectors and sinners or with friends, either casual or close, is a fundamental trait of the historical Jesus. There Jesus reveals himself to be God's eschatological messenger, conveying the news of God's invitation to all – including and especially those officially regarded at the time as outcasts – to the peace meal of God's reign; this table fellowship in itself, sharing a meal with Jesus, is an offer here and now of eschatological salvation. The instances where Jesus himself acts as host bring home even more forcefully the fact that Jesus takes the initiative in this eschatological message, which in table fellowship with him becomes as it were an enacted prophecy. It demonstrates once again that Jesus' praxis is nothing other than the praxis of God's kingdom which he is proclaiming. Only in the aftermath of this historical practice of Jesus does the significance of Christian table fellowship in the early church become intelligible. The Christians take over this praxis of Jesus. Acts 2:42-47: 'They devoted themselves ... to the breaking of bread', that is, to offering such meals; the concern for widows and orphans (in Luke's time) is a relic of that practice. 'They partook of food together with glad and generous hearts' (Acts

2:46). Conversions were also celebrated with a meal (Acts 16:34). Later it prompted the decision to share meals with uncircumcised Christians, after some conflict on the issue (Acts 11:3; Gal. 2:1-14). The early church's pronounced interest in table fellowship is unmistakably based on Jesus' own practice during his earthly life.

C. PRE-EASTER FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS OF DISCIPLES WHO 'GO AFTER HIM'

Literature. Kl. Berger, *Gesetzeauslegung*; H.D. Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament* (Beih. EvTh 37) (Tübingen 1967); L. Grollenberg, 'Mensen "vangen" (Lc. 5:10): hen redden van de dood', TvT 5 (1965), 330-336; F. Hahn, 'Die Nachfolge Jesu in vorösterlicher Zeit', in F. Hahn, A. Strobel, E. Schweizer, *Die Anfänge der Kirche im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen 1967), 7-36; M. Hengel, *Charisma und Nachfolge* (Berlin 1968); J. Kahmann, 'Het volgen van Christus door zelfverloochening en kruisdragen, volgens Mc. 8:34-38 parr.', [219] TvT 1 (1961), 205-226; J. Mánek, 'Fishers of men', NovT 2 (1958), 138-141; K. H. Rengstorf, s.v. *mantanô*, in: ThWNT IV, 392-417, and s.v. *mathètès*, ibid., IV, 417-465; G. Schille, *Die urchristliche Kollegialmission (*Zürich-Stuttgart 1967); R. Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testament* (Munich 1954); C. Smith, 'Fishers of men', HThR 52 (1959), 187-203; Ans. Schulz, *Nachfolgen und Nachahmen* (Munich 1962); S. Schulz, 'Jesusnachfolge und Gemeinde', in *Q-Quelle*, 404-480.

So far in this chapter about Jesus' way of life and conduct we have examined diverse situations which show how his consistent care for and outreach to those around him were experienced as salvation imparted by God – a salvation consciously proffered in those encounters by Jesus himself as the eschatological messenger of God's approaching kingdom. What stands out in this variegated whole of (often fleeting) encounters with Jesus is the fact that an intimate circle of disciples, as well as a somewhat wider circle, were his constant companions – so much so that after Jesus' death through this very community the experience of salvation from God in Jesus could develop from soteriological acknowledgment of Jesus into christological conversion to Jesus the Christ. We have already seen that the notion of 'little faith' (*oligopistia*), while indicative of periodic lapses, nevertheless presupposes an abiding commitment to Jesus in faith.

Although in the past exegetes have often argued the contrary, they have come to see that, prior to his death, the earthly Jesus did appoint disciples as his co-workers and send them out to proclaim the message of the coming reign of God, as he himself did, as well as to heal the sick and drive out devils. This commissioning of the disciples by Jesus is reported in Mk. 6:7-13 as well as in

the Q tradition (Lk. 10: 2-12 and parallels), and in Lk. 9:1-6 and Mt. 9:37-38 with 10:7-16. But these accounts all stem from only two independent forms: the Q tradition (particularly as incorporated into Lk. 10:2-12; Mt. 9:37-38 and 10:7-16 combine this tradition with Markan material) and the Markan tradition (Mk. 6:7-13, which Luke adopts in 9:1-6), whereas for various reasons (not to be enumerated here) the Q tradition would seem to be the earliest.[46] The historically solid core of this story goes back to Jesus' earthly life, although it appears that details were continually modified in response to successive new
[220] needs in the post-Easter situation; yet the original pre-Easter commissioning remained the criterion and norm. The main evidence for this is that the account has no christological content, but does employ the pre-Easter terminology of Jesus' message and praxis: the coming reign of God, healing the sick and expelling demons. Thus Jesus actually allowed his disciples to share in his own mission. It presupposes that their vocation to 'go after him' extended to imitating Jesus and – since he was an itinerant preacher of no fixed abode – following him wherever he went (and, as will appear later, even on the road to suffering). The commissioning of the disciples in the Q tradition is substantially reproduced in Lk. 10:2-12, parallels at Mt. 9:37-38 and 10:7-16 (with Luke adhering more closely to the Q tradition). From the narrative a clear pattern emerges: (a) the commissioning, (b) equipping them, (c) directions as to how the missionaries are to behave in the houses where they stay and the places they visit.[47] Originally it was an 'apophthegm', an event in Jesus' life handed down with a kerygmatic intention;[48] in practice this logion functioned as a missionary instruction and church rule. In tradition history Lk. 10:2-12 seems always to have formed a single unit – although (according to S. Schulz) this passage is part of the later Greek Judaeo-Christian phase of the Q tradition.[49] Of course the disciples were being sent on a mission to Israel (not to

[46] See F. Hahn, *Das Verständnis der Mission im Neuen Testament* (WMANT, 13) (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1963), 33-36; J. Roloff, *Apostolat, Verkündigung.Kirche* (Gütersloh 1965), 150ff; M. Hengel, *Nachfolge,* 82-85; F.W. Beare, 'Mission of the disciples and the mission charge: Mt. 10 and parallels', in JBL 89 (1970), 1-13; Schulz, *Q-Quelle* (404-419), 408; Hoffmann, *Q-Studien,* 229-70; Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* 59-60.

[47] Hahn, *Mission,* 34; Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* J9; Hoffmann, *Q-Studien,* 264; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 408.

[48] I have so far avoided this technical exegetical word. Bultmann borrowed it from the history of Greek literature (Bultmann, *Tradition,* 8-72, especially 8-9). 'Apophthegmata' are brief anecdotes in the synoptic tradition, centring on a logion of Jesus; thus the sole purpose of the story is to provide a framework for the logion (which was often transmitted on its own). Bultmann divides them into (a) disputations and (b) biographical anecdotes. B. van Iersel offers the following definition: 'Dans leur forme la plus pure, les apothegmes sont des péricopes réduites à une extension minime au cours de la transmission orale' ('La vocation de Levi', 217).

[49] The criterion in this case is that only to the exalted but to the earthly Jesus too (Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 409). Whether sending the disciples constitutes the creation of the church, projecting its own mission back onto Jesus' earthly life (as Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 510 argues) is another matter and this objection applies to his whole book, which does not take sufficient account of the integration of traditions from other local churches with that of the Q community. What is a 'second phase' in the Q community, therefore, is by no means a priori a 'recent' tradition in early Christianity as a whole

the gentiles). But the *de facto* rejection of Jesus' message and person colours the whole narrative (sheep among wolves, Lk. 10:3; shake the dust from your feet, Lk. 10:11; the city which rejects Jesus' emissaries will fare worse than Sodom, Lk. 10:12). One observes that Jesus' emissaries were enjoined to carry only the most rudimentary possessions (Lk. 10:4) – they are denied even the most basic needs of a poor person on such a journey! It is so radical, in fact, as to be simply un-Jewish, explicable only in light of the imminence of God's kingdom: the disciples' preaching, their cures and exorcisms would prefigure the coming reign of God here and now (Lk. 10:11).

But this discipleship springs from *Jesus' call*; and it is instructive to see how the disciples later reported their experience of the compelling force of that call. In his schematic, general account of how the twelve were called Mark says: '... he appointed twelve *to be with him and to be sent out to preach* and have *authority to cast out demons*' (Mk. 3:13-15). There had been prior references to Jesus and his disciples' (3:15), to the call of the first four disciples (1:16-20) and the call of [221] Levi, the tax collector (2:14). A clear distinction is made between the call of the disciples and the appointment of the twelve from their ranks. Particularly important is the call and the way in which the New Testament presents it. Along came Jesus while they were busy with their daily tasks, saying: 'Come, follow me' (Mk. 1:17; 1:20; 2:14). On each occasion they immediately left their work 'and followed him' (1:18; 1:20; 2:14). The parallel with the prophet Elijah's calling of Elisha is flagrant. Elisha was ploughing with a team of twelve oxen when the great prophet Elijah came by. Elijah (summoning him to take over his prophetic role) 'cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him "Go back again; for what have I done to you?" And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him' (1 Kings 19:19-21). In his turn the former herdsman Amos says: 'Yahweh took me from following the flock, and Yahweh said to me: "Go, prophesy to my people Israel"' (Am. 7:15). There can be no excuse for failing to obey such a summons at once; one leaves all behind and follows the one who calls. Those who want to procrastinate are sent away. '... a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go" ... Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my mother." But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead"' (Mt. 8:19,21-22; see Lk. 9:57-60). The dead burying the dead are people who do not at once get involved with Jesus' message of the beckoning kingdom of God.[50] This call is a

(see Part One, Criteria).

[50] M. Hengel, *Nachfolge,* 3-16, especially 8.

matter of life or death. It explicitly overrides the claims of a 'good work' (burying the dead), an obligation that all but outranks the fourth commandment (Torah). According to the Pharisaic interpretation burying the dead exempted one from practically every other legal obligation.[51] In the Old Testament there is only one prophetic act in which the prophet omits the death ritual 'as a sign' to make the people understand that God's judgment is imminent and burying the dead no longer has any point (Ezek. 24:15-24), just as Jeremiah would never even marry (Jer. 16:1-4) and forbade taking part in 'lamentations for the dead' (16:5-7) as a sign of God's coming judgment.[52] Jesus' calling of the disciples is likewise the act of a prophet, and in such a manner that the accompanying demand even exempted them from one of the
[222] most sensitive Jewish obligations.

Thus Jesus' call to 'follow him' is probably the clearest evidence of his role as eschatological prophet of God's imminent reign. It shatters all the boundaries of the master-disciple relationship, because it is an end-time deed by an eschatological prophet; it intensifies his call to *metanoia,* to an eschatological *metanoia* to discipleship, to total commitment, burning all one's bridges in the service of the kingdom to come. To associate oneself with Jesus like that is to put oneself unconditionally at the service of God's kingdom.

The situation is soteriological, but it does raise a christological question: is one's relationship with the coming reign of God dependent on a relationship with Jesus? Of course, considering the tenor of the Markan gospel (up to the christological confession of faith beneath the cross), Mk. 8:38 and 8:34-35 are less christologically explicit than even the Q source (Mt. 10:33 and parallel Lk. 12:9; Mt. 10:38 parallel Lk. 14:27). The real issue here is a call to leave absolutely everything and go along with Jesus, the itinerant preacher who, unlike the foxes and the birds that have their holes and nests, has nowhere to lay his head (Mt. 8:20, in connection with someone willing to answer the call). The concept of a call to follow Jesus is a constant theme in the New Testament (Mk. 8:34-38; Lk. 14:16-33 and 9:23-26; Mt. 10:38 and 16:24-27). In the Markan gospel Jesus, with his disciples around him, addresses the crowd as follows: 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?... For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (Mk. 8:34-38, parallels Mt. 16:24-27; Lk. 9:23-26). Elsewhere we read: 'He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who

[51] Strack-Billerbeck, I, 487ff; IV, 560.
[52] Hengel, l.c., 13.

loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it' (Mt. 10:38-39 parallel Lk. 14:25-27; see Lk. 17:33). The explanation of the 'doublets' in Matthew and Luke is that they incorporate two traditions, the Markan tradition in the first case, the Q tradition (Mt. 10:37-39, parallel Lk. 14:27; 17:33) in the second (three separate logia: that of following by 'taking up one's cross', that of 'losing one's life and gaining it' and that of 'being hated for Jesus' sake'). Obviously, these [223] pericopes were explicated christologically in the post-Easter period. Before Easter some disciples were called to further Jesus' historical preaching of the kingdom of God (as shall become apparent later).

The gospels clearly present Jesus' call according to a stereotyped schema: (a) Jesus passes by (Mk. 1:16,19; 2:14); (b) he sees somebody (Mk. 1:16,19; Jn. 1:47); (c) a more detailed account of the person's occupation (Mk. 1:16,19; 2:14; Lk. 5:2); (d) the call (Mk. 1:17-20; 2:14; Jn. 1:37); (e) 'leaving all' (Mk. 1:18-20; except in Mk. 2:14, but again in Lk. 5:11,28); (f) the person who was called follows Jesus (Mk. 1:18-20; 2:14; Lk. 5:11).[53] Thus it is obviously a literary construction, not a historically straightforward 'direct report' of how a call took place. We are faced with what were originally self-contained units of tradition, beginning with, 'as he passed by he saw someone' and ending with, 'arose and followed him'. Pivotal in this literary unit is the middle section: Jesus calls someone. This call entails abandoning one's occupation, home, family and possessions. As opposed to sending out the disciples to teach others, this fundamental, primary call is an invitation to become a 'student' and be taught by Jesus. Matthew 9:13 (in contrast to Mark) has this striking insertion: 'Go and learn', that is, 'learn from me' (see Mt. 11:29; as opposed to Mt. 28:19, where they are to teach others to be disciples). Jesus' words are a *didaché*, a teaching, for the Christian community;[54] Jesus is the teacher of the community.

These 'call' narratives have further implications. In late Judaism *conversion* to Israel's God – from paganism to Judaism – resulted in a social break with one's property, home and family, which had become a traditional expression for conversion among Jews of the Diaspora. In practice conversion meant abandoning one's possessions, being hated, having to leave father and mother, husband or wife, brother and sister, and all one's worldly goods. That gave rise to the *topos* of conversion (even if it did not entail a social rift). The prerequisites for conversion, and the conditions which accompany it, are: giving everything away, forsaking family and home, in order to follow Yahweh, Israel's God. Among Greek-speaking Jews this was associated catechetically with God's command to Abraham to abandon everything and

[53] Van Iersel, 'La vocation de Lévi', 216; Schille, *Kollegialmission*, 28-30.
[54] L.c., 227.

set out for the unknown, the promised land (Gen. 12:1-9). This divine command was frequently interpreted in late Judaism as a 'conversion vision'.[55] Thus in Greco-Jewish circles in early Christianity the step taken by Jesus' disciples, who left everything and 'hated' their kith and kin (Lk. 14:26) in order to follow Jesus, is presented according to the model of a conversion,[56] *metanoia*, necessary in view of the approaching reign of God. In other words, the
[224] traditional (Greco-)Jewish conversion schema is employed in the New Testament to denote the transition from being a Jew (pagan) to being someone who confesses Jesus. Put differently, to confess Jesus in this way is the *metanoia* which the coming reign of God requires (see Mk. 8:38; Mt. 16:27; Lk. 9:26); for it is on the strength of this that Jesus, the coming son of man, will judge the person. According to late Greco-Jewish sapiential Judaism the person who gives up everything will get it back 'a hundredfold' while still on earth (also Mk. 10:30), whereas according to the apocalyptic line (Mt. 19:29) the reward is purely eschatological.

The fact that the conversion model is used to show that turning to Jesus to follow him is the *metanoia* (about turn) demanded by the coming kingdom of God is clear from a number of things. We have said that when a gentile's conversion to Israel's God was not actually accompanied by a social breach, it was still envisaged in accordance with that model. The convert was to give away his property to the poor and, as proof of his readiness for conversion, devote himself to charitable work.[57] Typical of the Christian adoption of this pre-Christian conversion schema is the account of a call which in fact proved abortive: the rich young man (Mk. 10:17-31). He had scrupulously observed the ten commandments, the Torah. What was it he still lacked? Conversion to Jesus, presented here as both conversion and *metanoia* by the requirement to sell all that he possessed and 'give it to the poor', the condition for 'following Jesus' (Mk. 10:21); that is to say, he lacked the readiness to be converted to Jesus as evidenced by the fact that he was not prepared to take on the 'acts of

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[55] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 425. The Greco-Jewish conversion model becomes particularly clear in the conversion of the heathen Asenath to Judaism, in the religious novel *Joseph and Asenath;* also in 4 Ezra 13:54-6. It contains all the elements: forsaking everything, being hated, leaving and losing family, home and possessions, etc.

[56] It is noteworthy that Schulz has sufficient grounds for locating the logia about 'following' within the Greco-Jewish phase of the Q community; S. *Schulz, Q-Quelle,* 430-433; 444-446, 446-449.

[57] Thus the point here is not poverty as an 'ideal'; relinquishing everything is a once-and-for-all act, a consequence of the conversion, which entails a break with one's former social relationships. True, a general disparagement of earthly possessions comes to be associated later on with this conversion model (Test. Job 15:8; 4:6; *Joseph and Asenath,* p. 55, 14; Wis. 5:8; Mk.10:25). For Luke poverty is an ideal. If the then current humanistic Greek ideal of a perfect friendship through the sharing of goods was an *ideal* in such circles, Christians actually *realise* it; this is Luke's view (see Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 456). See M. Philonenko, *Joseph et Asenath* (Leyden 1968), with edited text (old edition, P. Batiffol [Studia Patrist., 1], Berlin 1889). The non-Christian character of this work is now (contrary to earlier doubts) more and more accepted (G. Kilpatrick; Ch. Burchard; J. Jeremias; M. Philonenko, etc.).

conversion' – surrender of possessions and care of the poor. This by no means implies that giving up one's possessions is just a metaphor for true conversion to Jesus; on the contrary, the actual surrender of material goods is a sign of and condition for true conversion. The radically new element here is not the connection between 'conversion' and 'leaving everything' (these were standard models), but the fact that the act of following Jesus is qualified as an eschatological *metanoia*, an authentic conversion; the other things – leaving all, et cetera – are not specifically Christian, but the concrete expression of the act of conversion (to Jesus). Even the conversion of the pagan proselyte Cornelius to Jesus Christ is described according to this model (Acts 10:2,30-32).

Mark puts the unsuccessful call of the rich young man after the pericope [225] about accepting the reign of God 'like a child' (Mk. 10:13-16). Becoming like a child is another traditional Jewish formula for conversion to the true God of Israel: following God, the Father, and becoming his child.[58] The children who were turned away by the disciples are 'blessed by Jesus', who pointedly lays hands on them (Mk. 10:16). This (also see Acts 3:26, as well as inter-testamenal literature) is the special rite of admission for converts. 'Becoming humble as a child' is the expression used for the eschatological *metanoia* as conversion to Jesus – in the post-Easter Christian church a prerequisite for membership of the eschatological community.

The distinctive thing about following Jesus, therefore, does not lie in abandoning everything in order to achieve a master-disciple relationship, in the sense proposed by A. Schulz,[59] nor, as M. Hengel asserts,[60] in simply making one's avowal to Jesus (though in substance this is correct), but rather in the fact that this avowal is qualified as a *religious conversion*; that is to say, the salvific scheme of the Jewish law is declared insufficient. The *metanoia* demanded by the coming kingdom of God is conversion to Jesus – that is the theological relevance of the call 'to follow Jesus'. In that conversion the still-to-come rule of God nevertheless becomes an already present reality.

Whereas Mark sees total surrender of possessions and following Jesus as a precondition for conversion to Christianity, Matthew limits these requirements to the twelve, the foundation of the Christian church. In so doing he dismisses any earthly compensation; the reward is strictly eschatological, and is the same for the twelve as for all Christian believers. Moreover, for Matthew the pericope provides a foundation for the authority of the twelve (Mt. 19:28). But he is not endorsing a *duplex via*, a twofold way to eternal life, on the one hand by keeping the commandments (Mt. 19:17), on the other, for 'the perfect', by selling all and following Jesus (Mt. 19:21); in Mt. 19:29 those conditions apply

[58] Berger, l.c., 428, and in *Amen-Worte,* 41-46.
[59] A. Schulz, *Nachfolgen,* 63, 131.
[60] M. Hengel, *Nachfolge* (the thesis of this whole study).

to every Christian. Clearly Mt. 19:29 treats the conversion narrative as applicable to anyone who is becoming a Christian (Lk. 9:23 underlines this general applicability), whereas in Mt. 19:17 the requirement applicable to *non-Christians* is presented as a condition for entering into eternal life. One could say: here the Old Testament is set over against the New Testament, and not a preferential Christian way of life over against a 'common' variety (see Lk. 10:25-37; and in a subsequent exposition of 'the two great commandments', a
[226] summary of the Law). The missing element in the twofold great commandment – love of God and of one's neighbour – is conversion to Jesus; this is the 'perfection' of the New Testament as opposed to the Old. It is the condition for membership of the eschatological community.

In the New Testament the message explicitly conveyed by the idea of following Jesus is that fulfilment of the Law (however necessary it may be, being God's commandment; see below) is no longer sufficient for salvation. Salvation is effected via one's relationship with Jesus; but as an eschatological messenger Jesus knows only the commandments of God: he brings no new commandments. However, the effectiveness of conversion required and entailed by the coming kingdom of God is bound up with the demand to turn to Jesus; prior to Easter this meant acknowledging him as the eschatological prophet sent by God, who brings the good news that 'God shall reign' (Isa. 61:1-2; 52:7).

Up to a point this enables us to distinguish Jesus' pre-paschal calling of disciples from the explicit Christology into which it is already incorporated in the New Testament. After all, in Scripture 'to follow' (in the Septuagint *akolouthein*)[61] is associated with 'going after other gods' or 'following God' by keeping his commandments (Deut.; 2 Macc. 8:36). This idea is found again in 1 Pet. 1:15-16: '... as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."' As the eschatological messenger from God, 'on whom God has set his name' (see Part Three), Jesus is simply conveying God's message and calling Israel to faith in God; that was his mission prior to his death (see above: 'Faith and miracle'). Therefore answering Jesus' call, in acknowledgment of his prophetic mission, meant putting one's faith in God, in his coming reign and accomplishing the necessary *metanoia* – at the invitation, that is, of Jesus himself. In other words, prior to Easter the decision to 'follow' had soteriological but not yet consciously christological significance. The christological issue is, of course, implicit: to be converted to God on Jesus' authority as a preacher. In other words, before Easter there is no question of conversion to Jesus; that notion entails an explicit Christology. Mark's account of the calling of the twelve,

[61] See, e.g., Hosea 2:5 (7); Ezek. 29:16; 13:3; Ps. 16:4.

therefore (leaving aside, in this context, the notion of 'the twelve'), is still historically the closest to Jesus' actual calling of the disciples in the pre-Easter situation: 'And he appointed [them] *to be with him and to be sent out to preach and* [227] *have authority to cast out demons'* (Mk. 3:14-15): Jesus calls them to be his companions and help him proclaim the coming kingdom of God, manifested in healing the sick and driving out demons – as we are told again later when they are actually sent out (in the Markan tradition, Mk. 6:7-13; in the Q tradition, Lk. 10:2-12 parallel Mt. 9:17-38; 10:16,9-10a,11-13,10b,7-8,14-15). This is accurately reflected in the injunction: 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men' (Mk. 1:17; Lk. 5:10). It suggests an Aramaic logion in which the Aramaic term can mean both 'fisher' and 'hunter' – as well as 'capturing alive' (*zôgrein*) (Lk. 5:10), here rescuing people from the coming judgment and from demonic powers.[62] Hence service rendered to the kingdom of God is a service of deliverance, liberating one's fellow men. The disciples play their part in what R. Pesch rightly calls Jesus' 'gathering together campaign'.[63] The disciples follow Jesus by doing what he does, proclaiming the message of God's kingdom, healing the sick and driving out devils; and they must do so with an attitude of discipleship, reflecting the praxis of the kingdom of God as exemplified by Jesus in word, parable and deed. After Easter this praxis came to be specified more precisely according to the needs and outlook of the first Christian communities and in accordance with their own community rules (later: 'church order') as well as the particular theology of the local church or evangelists. So Mark views discipleship as the missionary assignment given to itinerant missionaries ready to face martyrdom (Mk. 8: 34-36). Mt. 16:24-28 and Lk. 9:23-27, on the other hand, see it as a matter of following God's will as taught by Jesus. In any event, for all of them Jesus is 'the team leader'; that is the historical memory that speaks throughout.

Historically, accompanying Jesus in the sense of being at the disposal of the coming kingdom of God implies readiness to suffer in the service and for the sake of that kingdom. 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me' (Mk. 8:34; in the Q tradition, see Mt. 10:38, parallel Lk. 14:27; see Mt. 16:24). Put in the first person like that, it is obviously a piece of post-Easter Christology. In terms of pre-Easter soteriology it means that accompanying Jesus on his mission to proclaim the kingdom of God will meet with opposition and result in suffering. This logion echoes the old remembered words: 'He who would serve the kingdom of God must deny himself and take up his cross.' The phrase 'take up his cross' also occurs in the Q tradition, which, unlike other churches, has no theology of the cross. [228]

[62] See M. Hengel, *Nachfolge,* 85-87; cf. L. Grollenberg, *Mensen vangen* (as 'rescuing from death'), 330-336.

[63] R. Pesch, *Jesu Ureigene Taten?,* 154.

'Carrying one's cross' (in contrast to the Pauline 'carrying *my* cross'), then, is in no sense, *per se*, a post-Easter reference to Jesus' crucifixion. The expression 'to carry one's cross' was current even in secular Greek,[64] but it is not Semitic. On the other hand, according to M. Hengel 'carrying one's cross' might have been an expression common among the Zealots, because crucifixion was the standard death penalty for these resistance fighters and many Palestinians must have had the image of crucified people vividly in mind.[65] In any case, in the Q tradition 'carrying one's cross' is interpreted metaphorically. It is a summons to be ready to lay down one's life for God's sake, to be ready for martyrdom. (Hence it stands to reason that in circles with a developed passion theology this logion of Jesus acquired concrete significance from his crucifixion.) Thus even in times of persecution one must serve God's kingdom unconditionally. That is why Mark in particular interprets the panic and flight of the disciples at the time of Jesus' arrest as reneging on their discipleship (see below). This unconditionality is justified eschatologically, like the call itself, as being for the sake of God's kingdom, or as Mark explicates it in light of Easter, 'for my sake and the gospel's' (Mk. 8:35; 10:29).[66] For Mark losing one's life and taking up one's cross comes about through proclamation of the gospel, which arouses opposition; and this is precisely how they are 'following' Jesus. In remembrance of Jesus the disciples were actualizing what was accomplished in Jesus' own life. Because to Mark the paschal events are part of the *euaggelion* being proclaimed, the preaching of the gospel by Jesus' disciples after Easter will also mean following Jesus on his path of suffering. Thus 'going after Jesus' shatters the established boundaries of Jewish, Greco-Jewish and Greek models of 'following the master'. Accordingly 'following Jesus' primarily means sharing his fate, as 1 Pet. 2:21-22 was to put it. 'Be you holy, for I [Yahweh] am holy' (1:15-16) and, 'To this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.'[67] This demonstrates the tradition-historical connection between 'following God' and 'following Christ'. Prior to Easter, fellowship with Jesus – at table, by turning to him for help and healing, above all by being constantly with him in the
[229] service of his message – turns out to be an offer of salvation from God; this fellowship has a fundamentally soteriological meaning, whose christological implications became explicit only after Jesus' death. Nevertheless – as opposed to cases where individual passers-by approach Jesus (for healing) and in so

[64] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 432; see H. Braun, *Radikalismus,* II, 104-105.
[65] Hengel, *Nachfolge,* 64.
[66] R. Schnackenburg, 'Das "Evangelium" im Verständnis des ältesten Evangelisten', in *Orientierung an Jesus* (Freiburg 1973), 309-323, 316-318.
[67] After the healing of blind Bartimaeus, Mk. 10:52 says: 'He was at once able to see and he went and followed him *(èkolouthhei)* on his way', that is, for Mark: following Jesus on his way to the passion (his going up to Jerusalem).

doing acknowledge him as a prophet sent from God – his intimate disciples' more habitual practice of turning to him, or of being his companions (despite frequent lapses in their faith), summarizes what Christian life would become after Easter. That explains the ambiguity of the New Testament passages on this theme, which sometimes raise the question whether they are intended for all Christians or just for a special group of disciples. In my view this results from the fact that in the kerygmatic situation of early Christianity historical reminiscences actively feature – memories of the special fellowship Jesus shared with his closest disciples as distinct from the many sympathizers and sick people he healed (one thinks of the ten who were healed, only one of whom returned to him). The close disciples' distinctive 'faith in Jesus', therefore, was still 'in the making', and after Easter would become known as Christian faith. It is this pre-Easter faith of Jesus' disciples that has become the carrier of the 'Jesus tradition'. The faith of all who followed Jesus in the service of the coming reign of God, faith in Jesus as the one who proclaims the message of the kingdom of God, establishes continuity between the experience of salvation before Easter and post-Easter conversion to Jesus as the crucified-and-risen one. Of all the memories of the offer of salvation, extended by Jesus in various forms during his earthly life, those of his enduring fellowship with the disciples who 'followed him' are perhaps the most poignant; after Jesus' death this form of the offer was to confront them expressly with the christological question.

§2 Man's cause as God's cause: the 'God of Jesus'

A. JESUS LIBERATING MANKIND FROM A CONSTRICTING VIEW OF GOD: JESUS AND THE LAW

Literature. KI. Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu,* I (Neukirchen 1972); J. Blank, 'Zum Problem "ethischer Normen" in Neuen Testament', *Schriftauslegung in* [230]
Theorie tmd Praxis (Munich 1969), 129-157, and *Jesus von Nazareth* (Freiburg 1972), 112-116, 50-67; H. Braun, *Spätjüdisch-häretischer und frühchristlicher Radikalismus,* I. *Das Spätjudentum,* II, *Die Synoptiker* (Tübingen 1957); F. Gils, 'Le sabbat a été fait pour l'homme et non l'homme pour le sabbat', RB 69 (1962), 506-523; E. Jüngel, *Paulus und Jesus* (Tübingen 1964[2]); M. Limbeck, *Die Ordnung des Heils. Untersuchungen zum Gesetzesverständnis des Frühjudentums* (Düsseldorf 1971) and *Von der Ohnmacht des Rechts. Zur Gesetzeskritik des Neuen Testament* (Düsseldorf 1972); J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 51-110; P. Stuhlmacher, *Die Gerechtigkeit Gottes* (FRLANT, 87) (Göttingen 1965); S. Schulz, 'Die charismatisch-eschatologische Toraverschärfung', in Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 94-141.

(a) Difficulty of exegetical research

To us Jesus' attitude to the Torah or Jewish law as reflected in the New Testament appears very complicated, so that some regard Jesus as the great revolutionary against the legal establishment, while others see him as radical and even rigorous. Yet we should not lose sight of the fact that Jesus and the earliest generations of Christians saw themselves as part of Judaism. In these circumstances religio-historical parallels are questionable. On the other hand, Jesus *was* condemned and executed. And this shows that some aspects of his preaching and conduct conflicted with the official teachings of Judaism or a section of Judaism at that time. 'Jewish teaching' was less uniform than might be supposed.

For Palestinian Jewry the Torah was first and foremost the Pentateuch, the so-called five books of Moses; the prophets and the other books of Scripture were a commentary on these. Also forming part of this commentary, at least in the Pharisaic tradition (which in this respect contrasted with that of the Sadducees), was the 'fence around the Law', that is the oral traditions of the patriarchs, said to be the tradition of Jewish casuistic ethics. In practice the whole was described as *Torah,* Law. The underlying idea was that this Torah was the law of God, revelation and proof of God's love, expression of his saving activity, which was concerned with human wellbeing (salvation). Anyone, therefore, who impugns the Torah impugns God himself.

[231] It is often overlooked that the Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora interpreted the Law quite differently from the Aramaic-speaking Jews of Palestine. The former drew a clear distinction between the Torah as the decalogue, God's authentic ordinances in creation, and the various 'Mosaic laws' that had been given to the people because of their 'hardness of heart'. Since their defection from Yahweh by setting up the golden calf, the post-Sinaitic 'Mosaic laws' were a compromise, mere human ordinances as it were. Thus they cited Ezek. 20:25-26: 'Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life; and I defiled them through their very gifts in making them offer by fire all their first-born, that I might horrify them; I did it that they might know that I am the Lord [Yahweh].' Hence the Greco-Jewish ideal of the *restitutio principii*: 'it was not so in the beginning'; the aim was to restore the pristine order of creation and rid it of the subsequent accretion of 'manmade laws'. This notion of the 'restoration of the original state of things' features conspicuously in the Wisdom literature.[68] Whereas Aramaic Judaism regarded the entire Torah as an expression of the order of creation, Greek Judaism made a sharper distinction between that order (Torah proper) and the manmade laws in the Mosaic Torah

[68] *Ap' archès,* see Wis. 6:22; 9:8; 14:12; 24:14; Eccles. 15:14; 16:26; 24:9; 39:25; Prov. 8:23; Eccles. 3:11.

(e.g. divorce law). The decalogue is the direct expression of God's will, whereas many of the manmade rules lay an intolerable burden on people, and also often undermine the will of God and the purpose of the 'divine laws'. Thus Hellenistic Judaism, under the influence of the Wisdom literature, stressed (a) God's creation, the ground of all true commandments as divine laws, (b) also, and primarily, the ethical and socio-ethical (interpersonal) commandments, and (c) uncleanness − not external but in a spiritual sense, that is, idolatry. Among these Diaspora Jews, who consorted commonly with gentiles and drew their inspiration mainly from the prophets, many were of a decidedly anti-Levitical persuasion. When large numbers of them, deeply affected by their religious commitment to Judaism, returned from the Diaspora to live in Jerusalem, they were disillusioned by the religious apathy prevailing in the synagogue and the temple: it was an 'established religion'. In (pre-Christian) Jerusalem, therefore, there was internal tension between these Greek-speaking Jews and the 'Levitic' Jews. The former interpreted the Levitic laws as allegorically ethical, and they did not feel bound by the rules on external purity.[69]

In these Greco-Jewish circles the eschatological prophet was seen as the true [232] teacher of the Law, calling the people back to the 'true law of God', from which human laws had seduced them. The replacement of God's law by human laws was in fact interpreted as Israel's cardinal unfaithfulness and defection from the Law. The anti-Christ was set over against the Christ; he was the great opponent of the Law who led the nation into apostasy, while the 'anointed one' or eschatological prophet recalled it to God's true law, the decalogue.

The historical background to this twofold interpretation of the Law in Israel dates back to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who allowed the Jews to retain their (universal) decalogue but abolished the other Mosaic laws. To strictly orthodox Israelites his behaviour appeared to be 'anti-God', against the Law.[70] Antiochus abolished the sabbath, the sacrificial cult and feast days. His policy was directed against the Law and the temple or holy place. The more universally inclined, Greek-speaking Jews came to terms with this concrete situation and proceeded to give it a theoretical basis. Thus the Greco-Jewish notion of 'secondary laws' on account of 'hardness of heart' does ultimately come, via a number of different historical routes, from the Deuteronomic tradition; it is a genuine, though not universal strain in Judaism. The conflict about the Law is therefore a pre-Christian traditional controversy in Judaism. Because of its relationship with the pagan laws of Antiochus IV this Greco-Jewish conception of the Law was fiercely opposed, especially by the Levitic orthodox Jews of Palestine.

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[69] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 15, and 474-477.

[70] See 1 Macc. 1:44-49; Dan. 7:20; 7:25. See 2 Macc. 7:30.

It is noteworthy that the actual *substance* of Jesus' critical attitude towards the Law, as articulated in the New Testament, has a great deal in common with this Greco-Jewish interpretation of the Law. In other words, in this respect Jesus was completely Jewish and in no way exceeded what was possible for a Jew at that time. However, a caveat is called for. It is difficult to argue that Jesus the Galilean was brought up with a Greco-Jewish understanding of the Law. Up to a point, of course, particularly in its towns around the lake and at the sea, Galilee was a kind of Jewish diaspora, a country with a very mixed, even bilingual population; and the purity laws were far from being as fully observed as in Jerusalem orthodoxy, although the synagogues were certainly supervised by 'the scribes of the Pharisees' (see Mk. 2:16). But if we cannot assume the influence of a Greco-Jewish conception of the Law in Jesus' case, the suspicion arises that the New Testament picture of Jesus' attitude towards
[233] the Law was adapted after Easter − very likely by coteries of Greek-speaking Jewish Christians. In the course of this study we have noted more than once the considerable influence on early Christianity of highly active Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, who almost from the start had been members even of the mother church of Jerusalem. This poses a problem: what is historical remembrance of Jesus' praxis and teaching with respect to the Law, and what is simply promotion of the Greco-Jewish interpretation of the Law by a very active group in the early Christian church (the Hellenistic Jews)? To assess this, we have a fair degree of certainty about insights already gained into Jesus' preaching and praxis of the kingdom of God, which can serve as an auxiliary criterion (see Part One). As we have repeatedly established in the case of earlier themes, on the basis of the foregoing we are dealing with two layers shifting over each other, the substratum being the historical recollections of Jesus 'lurking' as it were beneath them, hence an intra-Jewish controversy (e.g. Mk. 7:1,5,15) and, after the secession of the Christian community from the Jewish synagogue, a controversy of the *church* with *Israel* (e.g. Mk. 7:2,3-4, 6-13,14,17-19,20-22).[71] Without going into too much detail, a dip into reliable exegetical findings is called for, although the results attained so far will serve – 'theologically' as it were − as a guideline.

(b) Q traditions and Markan traditions about 'Jesus and the Law'

In the New Testament, whenever Jesus or his disciples contravene the Law this is manifestly interpreted as one of the factors accounting for Jesus' inevitable progress towards the cross. They are recorded to explain how matters could reach a point where Jesus was crucified. The motive, therefore, is kerygmatic rather than historical. On the other hand it would be wrong to argue that the situation in which these pericopes were written was merely the church's

[71] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 477.

concrete practice regarding the Jewish sabbath, which they sought to legitimize by citing Jesus. Of course, it is impossible to deny that the gospels, written in a period when the church had completely broken with Judaism, the temple, the Law and the sabbath, must have felt the effect of these things; but on analysis it cannot fairly be said that these pericopes about Jesus' attitude towards the sabbath are just a retrojection of actual practice onto the life of Jesus. Awareness of the historical distance between Jesus' free approach to the [234] sabbath and the church's praxis of worship has left traces in the text itself. The Palestinian local churches continued to observe the sabbath and keep the Law (Mt. 24:20; see Acts 13:3; 14:23); they considered themselves a brotherhood within Judaism. In the Pauline churches, on the other hand, people were not interested in keeping the sabbath. But in Paul's mission fields (Asia Minor) the Jewish law and sabbath did have considerable influence (Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:8-11).

The evidence we can depend on comes from two traditions: the pre-Markan tradition and the Q source. Luke, on the other hand, still uses texts from his own traditional material (Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-6), although it is very much secondary. Our starting point, therefore, remains Mark and the Q tradition.

Although the pre-Markan complex is very old (Mk. 2:1-3, 6), some of the material from what is perhaps the earliest phase of the Q tradition (i.e. its Aramaic period) is, if not older, still less open to suspicion of having been influenced by the Greco-Jewish interpretation of the Law.[72] Hence it strikes me as the best point of departure (despite a lesser degree of certainty than S. Schulz expresses about the exclusively Aramaic pericopes as a whole).

In these texts we do not find criticism of Israel as such, but of Pharisaic exposition and application of the Law. 'Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness . . . But woe to you Pharisees, for you tithe the mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees for you love the best seat in the synagogues and salutations in the market places. Woe to you for you are like graves which are not seen, and men walk over them without knowing it... Woe to you lawyers also; for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you; for you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. So you are witnesses and consent to the deeds of your fathers; for they killed them and you build their tombs... Woe to you lawyers; for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were

[72] Lk. 11:39, 42-44.46-48, 52 = Mt. 23:25, 23,6-7a,27,4,29-31,13; Mt. 5:18=Lk. 16:17; Mt. 5:32=Lk. 16:18; Mt. 5:39-42=Lk. 6:29-30; Mt. 5:44-48=Lk. 6:27-28,32-36; Mt. 7:12=Lk. 6:31. See Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 94-141.

entering.' These are the seven 'woes' of the Q community (Lk. 11:39,42-44,46-48,52). They pronounce an apocalyptic curse on the Pharisaic approach to life. What Mark presents in the form of controversies here assumes the form of an
[235] 'apocalyptic (i.e. final) anathema'. As opposed to Matthew (23:26) and Luke (11:41) (both redactions), the Q community continues to endorse the ceremonial purity rules (do this, don't omit that!); criticism is aimed not at the rules but at the attitude and outlook governing their observance. Ceremonial conduct and ethical attitude should correspond. One might say that according to this interpretation the Law cuts deeper. Mere outward observance of the purity rules shrouds a hidden state of impurity. This criticism of the Pharisees is still a strictly intra-Judaic affair, not even Greco-Jewish; one finds it also among the Essenes (in the Qumrân documents). It is plainly stated that the essence of the Law is humaneness or righteousness and love of God (Lk. 11:42), and that for someone who rides roughshod over these commandments any other observance of the Law is hypocrisy; it makes him 'a grave which is not seen' (walking across a grave defiles a person), that is to say, the Pharisees make others unclean.[73] They place heavy burdens on the people (Lk. 11:46), without lifting a finger themselves. The target of this criticism is not the Law or its stipulations; it is aimed at the gap between doctrine and life and the lovelessness towards others which underlies it. Lastly, the Pharisees honour the memory of past prophets but will not accept the authority of prophets living among them. Thus they debar others from entering the kingdom of God (Q in Mt.). These Palestinian Christians continue to recognize the regulative authority of the scribes of the Pharisees, that is, that they are empowered to open up God's kingdom by interpreting the Law correctly; for in Pharisaic terms keeping the Law means 'entering the kingdom of heaven' (even the Judaeo-Pharisaic notion of the kingdom of God is employed here). The Pharisees do not enter the kingdom themselves, and through their behaviour they prevent others from entering. The Q community's final criticism is aimed at the Pharisees' claim to priority and privilege; in the kingdom of God all are equal (indeed, the Q community's church order differs from that of Jerusalem; charismatic prophets − not *presbuteroi* − preside).

In these pronouncements of woe Jesus is implicitly seen as the true teacher of the Law, in contrast to the Pharisees, who fail to observe the inner intention of the Law: love of God and love of one's neighbour. This criticism of the Pharisees' Law observance is still Jewish.

Even so, in terms of the approaching reign of God the scope of Mosaic law is

[73] 'Invisible tomb' and 'whitewashed tomb': both expressions become intelligible in light of late Jewish rules for purification. Just before the Passover feast polluted graves were whitened with limewash so that no one would 'unwittingly' continue to walk over them and thus become 'unclean' (Num. 19:16).

circumscribed: it is subject to an eschatological proviso (Mt. 5:18=Lk. 16:19). The dawn of God's kingdom puts an end to the Law (Mt. 5:18). Later it was [236] said, in similar vein: 'The Law and the prophets were until John.' Jesus ushers in the eschatological age; he comes in place of the Law (Lk. 16:16). But in the thoroughly eschatological vision of the earliest layer of the Q tradition such a 'realized eschatology' is out of the question.

As far as motivation is concerned, the strict prohibition of divorce in the Q community (Mt. 5:32=Lk. 16:18) (omitting the Matthean clause that allows one exception) is in line with Levitic notions of purity (no remarriage with a divorced person) (whereas Mk. 10:11 puts a Greco-Jewish emphasis on not sending the woman away). This prohibition clearly tightens up Jewish law.

Lastly, this older stratum of Q contains three stipulations that clearly reflect its interpretation of the Law: the need to completely relinquish the principle of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth (Lk. 6:29-30=Mt. 5:39-42); love for one's enemy (Mt. 5:44-48=Lk. 6:27-28,35b,32-35a,36); and 'the golden rule' (Mt. 7:12=Lk. 6:31), that is, 'as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them'. In particular, against the background of late Jewish sectaries in Palestine who isolated themselves in 'remnant' communities and regarded the rest as 'non-brothers', the commandment to 'love one's enemy'[74] is striking. This, too, might be regarded as a refinement of the Law (Lev. 19:18), because the concept of 'neighbour' is broadened to include enemies. Importantly, the commandment to *love* one's enemy is associated in the Q community with the promise of sonship of God (Mt. 5:45; Lk. 6:35b). In terms of tradition history this idea relates to a sapiential *theologoumenon*: the righteous man − that is one who maintains a good relationship with his fellows − is a 'son of God'.[75] 'An enemy', in the eyes of those who see him as an enemy, is an unrighteous person, someone who is in the wrong. Thus what this commandment to love calls in question is self-righteousness: giving up one's own claim to righteousness is said to be a demand made by Jesus, a demand from God; not to question God's justice but to doubt one's own; God 'makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good' (another sapiential invocation of God's order of creation) (Mt. 5:45). Besides, even tax collectors and sinners love those who love them; without love for one's enemy one is no different from them (Mt. 5:46-47). The conclusion is: 'Be merciful [Matthew has 'perfect'], even as your Father is merciful' (Lk. 6:36; see Sirach 4:9-10). Just as God draws no

[74] See especially D. Lührmann, 'Liebet eure Feinde', in ZThK 69 (1972), 412-438, and Ch. Burchard, 'Das doppelte Liebesgebot in der frühen christlichen Ueberlieferung', in *Der Ruf Jesu und die Antwort der Gemeinde* (Festschrift J. Jeremias, Göttingen-Zürich 1970), 39-62, and W. Bauer, 'Das Gebot der Feindeslicbe und die alten Christen', in *Aufsätze und kleine Schriften* (Tübingen 1967), 235-252; G. Bornkamm, 'Das Doppelgebot der Liebe', in *Neutestament liche Studien* (for R. Bultmann, Berlin 1957), 85-93. See also D. Nestlé, *Eleutheria,* I (Tübingen 1967).

[75] Lührmann, 'Liebet eure Feinde', 432; S. Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 135.

[237] boundaries, a disciple of Jesus cannot draw boundaries: he has no enemy whom he is not enjoined to love. This saying is corroborated by Jesus' own conduct in consorting, eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners; it is the praxis of the kingdom. Whether Jesus personally uttered the logion about loving one's enemies or not is of secondary importance; the point is that this was how he lived, the result of his proclamation (also in parables) of God's approaching reign. Viewed thus, the logion is unequivocally authentic Jesus material, even though the Q community, in actualizing Jesus' practice and norm, might have been reacting against friction and tensions in Palestine in the years preceding the Jewish war, and even though it might display some anti-Zealotic features. This insistence on radical love of one's neighbour is illustrated by an ancient Greco-Jewish but also generally Greco-Roman 'golden rule': never do to others what you would not wish them to do to you (Mt. 7:12; Lk. 6:31). Ideally the demands that we make on others must be the measure of our own behaviour towards them. 'That is the whole of the Torah' was what late Greco-Judaism was already saying.[76]

This gives us a major basic and 'authentic' principle to assess Jesus' attitude towards the Law: the radicalism of his demand for love of God and love of all men, even one's 'enemy', even tax collectors and sinners: in other words, Jesus' message of God's reign, centred on the wellbeing of mankind. *This* is the message which inspired the Q community, so these Q pericopes really reflect the impression made on his followers by Jesus' ministry.

The other tradition emerging from the pre-Markan complex (Mk. 2:1-3:6), in which five paradigmatic cases bearing on Jesus' ministry are presented, may also be helpful.

The first three stories (Mk. 2:1-12; 2:13-17; 2:18-22) have already been discussed in connection with Jesus' forgiveness of sins, eating with a party of tax collectors, and his disciples' disregard of fasting. Whether they also reveal Jesus' attitude towards the Law becomes clear from the next two stories, in which we are told how Jesus' disciples plucked ears of grain on the sabbath (Mk. 2:23-28) and, more especially, how Jesus performed a cure on the sabbath (Mk. 3:1-5).

The two pericopes fall within what is known in exegesis as a controversy, hence have obviously been influenced by the post-Easter Israel-church
[238] relationship. The question is simply whether the Christian church felt that its free approach to the sabbath was based on Jesus' historical conduct, or whether (as many scholars argue) it was retrojecting its own practice onto Jesus (perhaps without finding sufficient occasion and ground for it in the earthly Jesus' conduct). In other words: was the church in fact actualizing authentic

[76] Strack-Billerbeck, I, 460.

tendencies in Jesus' ministry, or was it retrojecting its practice, without any continuity with Jesus?

Jesus was walking with his disciples through a grain field on a sabbath day; as they strolled along his disciples − not he – plucked some ears of grain, a perfectly ordinary thing to do (though not on the sabbath). The Pharisees then held Jesus responsible for the behaviour of those 'who follow him', his disciples. This distinction between Jesus, who did not violate the sabbath, and his disciples, who did, could hardly have been prompted purely by church apologetics, for that would miss the whole point of it. On the contrary, the issue was the Jewish master-disciple relationship: from their behaviour, particularly in Jesus' presence, one can correctly infer what he taught. The crux is: where does Jesus get the authority to exempt his disciples from the duties imposed by the Law, granted that (like David of yore: 1 Sam. 21:6) he indeed permitted material transgressions of the Law? The point is not so much the general norm that positive laws must be set aside in an emergency (the scribes and Pharisees of the time could have largely gone along with that),[77] for (a) there is no question here of an emergency (as there was in the case of David and the holy bread), but (b) the parallel between 'David and his men' and 'Jesus and his men': that is, in view of David's exceptional position as a 'servant of God', it was permissible for him to contravene the Law for the good of his men; likewise Jesus, because of and in his service of the kingdom of God, had full authority to 'give exemption' from a human law. We have to do with an emissary of God, who can and may interpret the Law for himself. Ultimately it is a matter of Jesus' authority and status as the eschatological prophet 'from God'. The gist of it is faithfully rendered in Mk. 2:27-28: 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.' This text has been widely debated. Some commentators, notably H. Braun,[78] maintain that man is lord of the sabbath and that the later Jewish Christians were frightened off by that radical conclusion, hence restricted this authority christologically to 'the son of man', Jesus. They even had to justify Jesus' own conduct scripturally with reference to 1 Sam. 21:1-7 (in Mk. 2:25-26), Num. 28:9-10 (in Mt. 12:5), and [239] Hosea 6:6 (in Mt. 12:7), or else they simply omitted this logion (Mt. and Lk.). Mark alone has the radical logion: 'The sabbath is made for man' (and even then there are a number of variants in the manuscripts, proof of the hesitancy felt by Jewish Christians). H. Braun does concede that, even among the Jews, there were scribes who accepted the saying: 'The sabbath is for you, not you for the sabbath'; but according to him they were 'rare birds', besides offering

[77] E. Lohse, sub *sabbaton,* in ThWNT VII, 14-15.
[78] H. Braun, *Jesus* (Stuttgart-Berlin 1969²), 72-85 and 86-95. See also Tödt, *Der Menschensohn,* 121-123.

no criticism of the sabbath.[79] Jesus' attitude towards the sabbath he calls downright un-Jewish. Other scholars, especially J. Roloff, who have probed this question arrive at a different interpretation.[80] The logion is said to mean: '*Because* the sabbath is for man the son of man is lord of the sabbath.' The reasoning of the logion presupposes Jewish assent to the principle that the sabbath is for man as the accepted premise; from that − with a view to Jesus, the son of man − certain conclusions are drawn. The winged words 'the sabbath is for man' had been in circulation ever since the Maccabean period (see Mekiltha Ex. 31:13-14); and the argument in Mk. 2:27-28 has to be understood against that background. Behind the sabbath stands God; and even Jesus had no intention of attacking the sabbath in principle. But God meant the sabbath to be a gift to man and for man (Deut. 5:12-15; Gen. 2:2-3; Exod. 20:8-11). Actually, the sabbath was introduced in Israel out of social concern and compassion (to afford rest 'to slaves and cattle'); later on it was given a theological basis in the creation story. Judaic casuistry about the sabbath was originally designed to safeguard this divine gift against human arbitrariness. But this very legalistic quibbling in the long run betrayed the whole purpose of the sabbath: the sabbath law, intended to ensure rest and relaxation, was perverted by this casuistry into an intolerable burden. Jesus, who proclaimed the rule of God's humanely oriented kingdom, was bound by the very essence of his message to protest against that. Mk. 2:28 sets the absolute authority of the son of man over against the sabbatical decrees of the patriarchs and the scribes.

I think that J. Roloff's interpretation points us in the right direction, though with a fundamental proviso. The fact that Jesus contrasts his authority with that of the scribes strikes me as a post-Easter interpretation (apparent from the use of the term 'son of man' with reference to the earthly Jesus). Insofar as historical memories persist, Jesus was not acting on his authority as the one
[240] empowered to grant dispensation from the Law (even though that authority clearly features in Mark and his tradition). His claim to authority (prior to Easter) lies elsewhere. To my mind the passage, as a reference to the historical Jesus, conveys Jesus' awareness of being the eschatological prophet, held to be 'the true teacher of the Law'; Jesus traces the sabbath law back to its divine purpose: God's gift to man, not a burden imposed on people by others who fail to realize the point of it themselves. His criticism is not aimed at the Law as a revelation of God's will, but at the way the Law is practised. It has lost all religious relevance and lays burdens on the people which God himself does not wish to impose. The authority with which Jesus speaks is that of the prophet 'from God', who proclaims God's humane reign (hence: reverence for

[79] L.c., 81.
[80] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 58-62.

God's law) and on that ground is critical of these laws. Jesus' criticism and his reverence for God's law are essentially linked; it is in perfect harmony with his preaching of God's reign and the praxis of God's kingdom. The passage is soteriological in origin; in Mark it acquires a christological slant (post- Easter to be sure; but in itself it explicates the soteriology of Jesus' message and praxis. In view of his reserve about testifying to himself − his cause, after all, is God's cause − I cannot imagine Jesus himself saying, 'I [in the sense of the son of man] am the lord of the sabbath'). His personal identification with God's cause as the cause of man, which underlies his critical approach to the sabbath, entails a christological question − but one that is only explicated after Easter.

In the next pericope (Mk. 3:1-5) Jesus himself heals a man with a 'withered' hand on the sabbath. The Markan text presents the story as a mutual challenge between some Pharisees and Jesus. They were watching him to see whether he would cure a sick person on the sabbath (Mk. 3:2); Jesus for his part challenged them: 'Is it not lawful on the sabbath rather to do good than to do evil, to save life than to kill?'(3:4). They did not reply for, being good Pharisees, they had to go along with that. Jesus then healed the hand − angry but at the same time saddened by 'their hardness of heart' (3:5). The focus is not the miracle but the issue of the sabbath – Jesus' life-bringing act is clearly contrasted with the 'decision to destroy him' (3:6): according to the story, that is their response to Jesus' question (3:4). For Mark the problem is clearly christological. The original, pre-Easter version of events, though, is soteriological: theoretically the [241]
Pharisees would have to concede that one may do good on the sabbath; but in practice 'the fence around the law' prevented the good from being done. After all, from a Pharisaic standpoint it is permissible to save a life on the sabbath, despite the literal import of the Law. But in this case it was a shrivelled hand, a long-standing affliction, which Jesus might equally well have healed on another day, not on the sabbath. Jesus' criticism of the Judaic sabbath rest went beyond Jewish casuistry regarding diverse forms of emergency. It radically modifies the sabbath laws: sabbath rest is interpreted as a time for doing good, not for 'not being allowed': helping an unfortunate man is par excellence an act suited to the Sabbath, for then one is fulfilling God's saving will, the source of the sabbath law. Here again Jesus acts as the prophet from God, the 'true teacher of the Law'. Through his liberating conduct, which was an indictment of prevailing circumstances and attitudes, Jesus was creating a situation which turned out to be – for himself − explosive.

These two cases (in the complex Mk. 2:1-3:6) are manifestly making a christological point: the appearance of Jesus, the son of man, marks an exception to the general law: then one does not fast and the sabbath may be infringed; he is more than the Law. In this sense the perspective of this Markan

narrative is not the interpretation of the Law, but a christological conception. Yet the conception rests partly on historical memories of Jesus of Nazareth, who in word and deed was 'the true teacher of the Law' and expounded the Law according to its proper meaning: the freedom to do good (see Mk. 3:4). What emerges here is, in effect, a different notion of God: God's reign, which is oriented to the good of man. As the will of God the Law is radicalized as 'reign' ('dominion'), but at the same time bound up with (hence substantively modified by) the salvation of mankind. Jesus' critique of the observance of the sabbath and the Law is identical, therefore, with his vision of the living God: the God 'intent on humanity', which Jesus' own praxis increasingly embodies historically. In the context of their own theological outlook, we find the same core in the Markan parallels: Mt. 12:1-8, 9-14; Lk. 6:1-5,6-11, and in the peculiarly Lukan tradition in Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-6 − although the Christology in these pericopes is more explicit than in Mark, who merely hints at it, since the actual christological confession is made only at the foot of the cross. In the
[242] gospels, especially in the 'thematic' character of these stories − Jesus heals a withered hand on the sabbath, and in a synagogue to boot (Mk. 3:1-5), on the sabbath he cures a hunchbacked woman (Lk. 13:10-17) and, again on the sabbath, a victim of dropsy (Lk. 14:1-6) – we encounter recollections of the life of Jesus, who had no time for empty formalistic legalism, that is, devoid of real love for God and one's neighbour. Lk. 13:14 aptly captures this practical legalism: 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.' On the other hand we read: 'There is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him' (Mk. 7:15; cf. Mt. 23:23-24,25-28). (Nevertheless this is still a Greco-Jewish tradition: a man is not rendered unclean from outside but from within; in other words, outward rules of purity have no point except as a function of inward, ethical purity. Hence the slogan among Greek Jews: 'Everything is clean.')

Jesus was not against the Law; he radicalized it by exposing its innermost salvific purpose: freedom 'to do good'. This radically modified the substance of 'manmade laws'. It also meant that the praxis of the kingdom of God cannot be pinned down in formal laws (however necessary these may be in day-to-day living). Sometimes this may require one to do more than the Law stipulates; however, it may also require one to contravene the Law. At the same time it sets the lofty requirement that we should discern God's *kairos* or propitious moment in the concrete circumstances of life. That, at any rate, was Jesus' approach. Substantively this implies an intensification of the Torah, based on a proper perception of the living God and his coming kingdom − the reverse of what one might call lawless libertinism. It expresses true humaneness, based on a specific view of who the living God is. Jesus is the exegete, not of the Law,

but of God; as a result he exposes man and provides a new perspective on salvation. Finally, after Easter, when God's reign assumed the concrete features of Jesus Christ, it was logical that the old memories of Jesus should be revised and updated, and Jesus' criticism of the practice of the Law in light of God's reign should be seen as his historical claim to authority; in other words, what was historically the soteriological perspective of Jesus' earthly life was turned into a christological debate. The one evoked the other. (But there is a hidden danger that Jesus' criticism of the Law might be seen as a prerogative of Christ [243] − not of all Christians.) The Johannine gospel broadens the synoptics' theme of the sabbath. Of the three healings reported by John two occur on a sabbath day (Jn. 5:1-47; 9:1-39; see 5:9b and 9:14). Jesus' infringement of the sabbath rest is given an expressly christological basis. As a result his breach of the sabbath rest is even more provocative. He not only heals the crippled man on the sabbath, but orders him (as an act of sheer provocation) to pick up his stretcher and carry it himself − a 'gratuitous' breach of the sabbath. Here Jesus is indeed the sovereign and free law-giver. His eschatological activity is not to be constrained by any mundane law; he is the son of the Father, the fulfilment of the innermost intention of the Law, and at the same time its abrogation: 'Christ is the end of the Law' (Rom. 10:4). The period in which God revealed his will 'through the Law and the prophets' extends to John the Baptist; now he does so by preaching of the gospel of his kingdom (see Lk. 16:16).

(c) The cleansing of the temple

There is another episode that helps us to determine Jesus' attitude towards the Law: the cleansing of the temple (Mk. 11:15-18, parallels Mt. 21:12-17; Lk. 19:45-48; and Jn. 2:13-22). This an extremely difficult gospel pericope which has been interpreted in very diverse ways, even to the extent that (following R. Eisler) S. Brandon reads into it a kind of military Zealotic expedition by Jesus and his disciples into Jerusalem.[81] J. Roloff offers an exegetically reliable analysis of the passage, which I feel could be further refined by drawing on the insights of E. Trocmé. The oldest form of the story appears to be Mk. 11:15-16, 18a, 28-33.[82] It then becomes clear why early Christianity handed down this tradition: the event is reported in view of its consequences, namely Jesus' conflict with the representatives of the Sanhedrin. As a matter of fact, the

[81] *Literature.* H. W. Bartsch, *Jesus. Prophet und Messias aus Galiläa* (Frankfort 1970), and 'Theologie und Geschichte in der Ueberlieferung vom Leben Jesu', in EvTh 32 (1972), 128-142; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten,* 346-347; S.G.F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots,* 238-264 (passim); V. Eppstein, 'The historicity of the gospel account of the cleansing of the temple', in ZNW 55 (1964), 42-58; Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* l.c., 89-110; C. Roth, 'The cleansing of the temple and Zechariah 14:21', in NovT 4 (1960), 174-81; E. Trocmé, 'L'expulsion des marchands du temple', NTS 15 (1968-9), 1-22, and *Vie de Jésus de Nazareth vu par ses témoins* (Neuchâtel 1971), 127-136.

[82] Roloff, l.c., 93.

original narrative links Mk. 11:18a seamlessly with 11:28; that is to say, the question of Jesus' authority (which in the final text is left hanging in the air) was originally connected with the cleansing of the temple: members of the Sanhedrin asked Jesus by what authority he had done 'these things', that is, the cleansing of the temple. Thus in tradition history this event is not associated with the solemn entry into Jerusalem. The pericope as a whole points to a
[244] prophetic act by Jesus, for the logion in Mk. 11:30 connects it with the Baptist's prophetic ministry: Jesus postulates that both the baptism of John and his own act (the cleansing) imply prophetic authority. The argument of the logion is based on a material correspondence between John's and Jesus' ministry: both fall within the constellation of the message of eschatological conversion and the renewal of the people of God. That puts the historical point of the temple cleansing in perspective: it was Jesus's prophetic act to bring about Israel's end-time penitence and conversion. Hence it was in no sense a radical assault on temple or cult, still less a solemn and direct 'messianic' proclamation abolishing the Jewish cult in favour of an eschatological universalism that would open up the temple to all nations. It is not, in fact, a purification of the actual *temple*: the scene is the courtyard, the 'court of the gentiles', a large enclosure which the merchants with their wares used as a short cut (Mk. 11:16). The actual site of the cult does not come into this − only the sacredness of the entire temple complex. This idea of the holiness of the temple is strictly Jewish, but that is the point of Jesus' act: he is protesting against the gap between theory and practice in Judaism – as in his complaint about sabbath observance. Both concern a gap between 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxis'. To Jesus sabbath and temple are tokens of God's gracious goodwill towards Israel; but because of the way they are upheld they have become divorced from their proper purpose. It is an attack, not on the temple but on temple praxis in keeping with the great prophets, for whom the spirituality of temple worship lay in the requirement of *acting* in total obedience to God (Amos 5:21-25; Jer. 7:3ff). For that matter, Zech. 14:21, too, says that at the last day all Jerusalem and the whole temple complex will be 'sanctified': 'And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the flesh of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day.'[83] Nothing would make one suspect a messianic trait in Jesus' conduct, over and above an act of prophecy. Nothing in the incident goes beyond an end-time prophet's summons to eschatological *metanoia.* Only after Easter – looking back on the whole of Jesus' life − could the cleansing of the temple be interpreted as a veiled proclamation of Jesus' special authority (J. Schniewind).[84] The hope of

[83] Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 172; Roloff, l.c., 96.
[84] J. Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Göttingen 1949[5]), 150; Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 97.

an eschatological renovation of the temple was widespread in late Judaism,[85] [245]
but it was never associated with the messianic tradition.[86] All this confirms one of the basic propositions of this book: in his earthly life Jesus did not act in a messianic role but as the eschatological prophet from God − which, according to a particular Jewish tradition, is equally 'messianic'!

Besides positing the imperative need for absolute sanctification of the temple, Jesus spoke on other occasions about the Jews' dismantling of it and its eschatological rebuilding (Mk. 14:58 parallels). This − essentially authentic – logion, read in conjunction with Jesus' cleansing of the temple, lifts this event above its concrete historical content and significance: the place of encounter with God is not the temple but Jesus himself. Jesus replaces the temple as the medium of a relationship with God. In similar vein Matthew later declared: 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Mt. 18:20). After Easter what had been implicit, at least as a question, in Jesus' entire soteriological ministry was explicated christologically and even ecclesiologically. Just as the temple was God's presence on earth, so Jesus Christ becomes God's presence among us. But in the earliest layer of the account of the temple cleansing all we have is Jesus' call to eschatological praxis, in which the gap between theory and practice is closed, and the conflict that this criticism touched off between Jesus and Israel's leaders. For historically one of the reasons for Jesus' arrest clearly had something to do with the cleansing of the temple.[87] This general conflict − the cause of Jesus' journey to the cross – therefore reflects the initial purpose of the tradition, the reason why the story was told and retold in the early church.

In the synoptic tradition the original story (where the echoes of recollected history are strongest) was eventually linked with passages of Scripture (Isa. 56:7 and Jer. 7:11; Mk. 11:17). The very fact that these texts were added reveals – after the event, scripturally − the original purpose of the temple as opposed to what it had become in practice: the gap between orthodoxy and orthopraxis. It concerns Yahweh's judgment of what was actually going on in the temple (Jer. 7:11), for God had intended the temple to be 'a house of prayer (for all peoples)' (see Isa. 56:7). The accent is not on 'all peoples' but on 'house of prayer', in contrast with the 'den of robbers' that men had made of it. The drift is not eschatological (in Mark) but concerns God's judgment of malpractices. (Only Jn. 4:21-24 interprets the temple debate eschatologically.) Thus the whole [246]
Markan pericope appears to be fairly close to the original meaning of the story. The same applies to Mt 21: 12-17, which has actually dropped the 'for all peoples' (because this element was only intelligible in the context of the

[85] Ezek. 40-48; Hag. 2:9; Zech. 14:8; Ethiop. Enoch 90:28-38; 91:13; Jubilees 1:17,27,29.
[86] Excepting *Oracula Sibyllina* 5, 420ff, Strack-Billerbeck, I, 1005; cf. Roloff, l.c., 96, n. 154.
[87] H.W. Bartsch, *Jesus,* l.c., 43-59.

Isaiahan quotation and was not directly applicable to this case − not in Mark, either). Jesus was not advocating universal salvation, but was condemning Israel's concrete conduct, even though Matthew stresses the messianic character of Jesus' cleansing of the temple by conjoining it with the 'messianic entry' into Jerusalem (Mt 21:10; see also Mt. 21:14 and 11:5) and by citing Ps. 8:2 in Mt. 21:16. Luke for his part (in 19:45-46) depicts the scene quite soberly: he outlines one element in Jesus' progress towards the cross, without attaching undue meaning to it.

Yet, remarkably, John (in 2:13-22) sets the cleansing of the temple in the early part of his gospel. Literary dependence on the synoptic tradition is ruled out: conception and vocabulary are very different. But even in the pre-Johannine tradition the cleansing and the question of Jesus' authority would appear to be closely interrelated (Jn. 2:18), even more clearly than in the synoptic tradition. What is more, John expressly associates it with the logion about the temple being destroyed and rebuilt in three days. He also connects it with the authorities' decision to have Jesus put to death.

The four gospels, then, see a connection between the cleansing of the temple and Jesus' arrest. Although it is impossible, on the basis of Jesus' message and conduct, as well as the tenor of the gospel narrative, to distil the Zealotic fiction advanced by S. Brandon from this temple incident, one must not understate the political consequences and implications of Jesus' behaviour. The temple at that time was a stronghold of the policing authorities; and what happened there was 'hot news' throughout Palestine, certainly on Jewish feast days with their influx of people from every part of the country. There is much to be said for the view that historically this cleansing of the temple took place neither at the outset of Jesus' public life (John) nor at its end (synoptics) but somewhere in between.[88] Jesus' unassuming gesture in cleansing the temple, to which not a single allusion is made in the account of his passion and trial, acquired − in view of the situation − enormous 'political' significance, partly because of the scant popularity of the pro-Roman tradesmen in the temple courtyard.
[247] Historically the cleansing episode *may* perhaps have made Jesus a popular hero among a people long frustrated and bitterly hostile towards the temple authorities (who controlled Israel's currency and economy) and the Romans. This would explain the 'messianic' overtones of the account, particularly of his final days, which is hard to ignore; and it would give grounds for not assigning the cleansing of the temple to the very last week of his life and interpreting it as the immediate cause of his arrest. The Johannine gospel, which exegetes invariably set apart from the rest − at any rate when it comes to historically reliable memories of Jesus' earthly life − would seem to have its

[88] E. Trocmé, l.c., 1-2, and *Vie de Jésus de Nazareth,* 129.

own sources of historical information (however coloured by theology), specifically the 'rumours among the people' concerning Jesus of Nazareth. John puts the temple cleansing at the start of Jesus' public ministry. Historically that is manifestly incorrect; but it does serve to correct the synoptic view. The sudden more or less universal prominence, still detectable in the four gospels, given in Palestine to the 'Jesus affair' was most likely connected with his appearance and behaviour in the temple at Jerusalem. Such popularity of a man critical of the temple must have been the first positive reason for political anxiety among the leaders of Israel, the beginning of the fatal outcome of Jesus' life. Establishing the historical facts more precisely is impossible. But in such an atmosphere of popularity on the one hand and government suspicion on the other, various utterances of Jesus (e.g. about the destruction and rebuilding of the temple) would assume unprecedented and unforeseen proportions (see Mk. 14:56,59; Mt. 26:60-61, clear evidence of rumours circulating about Jesus' sayings; see also Mk. 13:1-2 and Mt. 24:1-2). John apparently witnesses, on the basis of a particular tradition, to these reports circulating among the people, when he connects the cleansing of the temple explicitly with Jesus' words about the Jews destroying the temple, which he himself would rebuild in no time at all (Jn. 2:19). Clearly Jesus' utterances are connected with his arrest via an intermediary filter of popular rumour concerning somebody who had suddenly become national news. For the one group Jesus eventually became a messianic hope, for the other a dangerous person. All this would seem to suggest a period of considerable popularity, to which various New Testament data bear testimony: here comes the long awaited son of David! In that case Peter's 'confession of faith' merely echoed a growing expectation in many quarters. This flame of messianism centring on Jesus which flared up in Palestine, however briefly, would certainly seem to have been the reason for the fateful disquiet of Israel's rulers, who from then [248] on really did keep a watch on Jesus − as the gospels repeatedly suggest. Jesus' surmise of a fatal outcome to his career also dates from that juncture. From the time of this dubious popularity onwards we observe in Jesus a certain reticence towards the people − still discernible in the gospels − and a concentration on intensive training of his disciples (see below).

The gospels do after all get it right when they establish a connection (though perhaps too direct) between Jesus' arrest and the cleansing of the temple. In the eyes of an exasperated nation, what for Jesus was fully in keeping with his message of the praxis of God's kingdom and his call to Israel to be converted to the true and living God became, considering the concrete situation, an audacious and provocative act, which indeed aroused messianic expectations among the people, and among the authorities grave suspicion and hostility. What was in fact − and in conformity with Jesus' life as a whole − a prophetic

act by the end-time messenger from God, intended to stir up Israel's faith in God − Jesus' attitude to the Law, the sabbath and the temple − was turned (partly via the prism of popular opinion) into a mortal threat to the official establishment. The *spiritual* threat and indictment that Jesus was, and that should have given rise to *metanoia,* thus came to nothing.

In answer to the question posed at the start of this section − in how far Jesus' attitude towards the Law substantially coincided with that of the Greek-speaking Jews − we can now affirm that their outlook (in the Hellenistic-Judaic ambit of early Christian tradition) clearly affected its formulation. Mark contrasts the *entolè,* God's commandment, with *paradosis,* tradition and the precepts of men (7:3,5 and 7:7 over against 7:8); that is exactly the Hellenistic-Jewish distinction. In a similar perspective the idea of 'hardness of heart' relates to the post-Sinaitic law on the certificate of divorce (Mk. 10:5). It also accounts for the divergent interpretations in early Christianity between Levitically oriented Jewish Christians (Mt. 5:32) and Hellenistic ones (Mk. 10:11 and 1 Cor. 7:10) regarding the motivation of marital fidelity.[89] We must not forget, however, that Jesus' own inspiration was his vision of the coming reign of God, which prompted him to stand up for the weakest, least privileged party − in this case the woman.[90] Nowhere does Jesus himself make the (Jewish-Hellenistic) distinction between primary and secondary laws; he
[249] assessed every law on its religious relevance for man and emphasized an inward, ethical attitude towards life in all law observance. This attitude was materially closer to the outlook of the Greek-speaking Jews than to Levitic orthodoxy; but one cannot demonstrate a Greco-Jewish influence on Jesus' own attitude, nor can it be said that his critical approach to the Law derived only from Hellenistic-Jewish circles in early Christianity. Yet the Hellenistic-Jewish Christians made a not inconsiderable contribution to the way Christians formulated Jesus' attitude towards the Torah. This is evident from the analysis of the next problem.

(d) The law as love of God and love of one's neighbour

The question of love of God and of one's neighbour as the sum total of the Law is found in Mark 12:28-34 (parallel texts Mt. 22:35-40; Lk. 10:25-28) and, according to Jn. 13:34-35, in Jesus' 'new commandment'.

Both commandments, taken separately, are thoroughly Jewish: 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God

[89] Berger, *Gesetzesauselegung,* 557-569.

[90] See B. van Iersel, 'Heeft Jezus in Mc. 10:2-12 de onontbindbaarheid van het huwelijk uitgesproken?', in *(On)ontbindbaarheid van het huwelijk* (Annalen van het Thijmgenootschap 58, 1970, no. 1, Hilversum 1970), 11-22, esp. 18.

with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might' (Deut. 6:4-5, see 26:16), and: 'You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord' (Lev. 19:18). Of course, this love of one's neighbour is still confined, here at any rate, to fellow Israelites, members of the people of God. Subsequently (Lev. 19:34) 'the stranger' is included among neighbours. It seems, moreover, that loving Yahweh' and keeping his commandments were originally synonymous (Deut. 6:4-5 with 6:6; 5:10; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1,13,22; 19:9; 30:6; esp. Deut. 6:4-5 with 26:16; 2 Kings 23:25). Only much later, particularly in Greco-Judaism, did this equation become a problem. Hence the Jewish question about the first and greatest commandment (also found in Mk. 12:28). Hellenism, hence the Greek-speaking Jews, recognized two major commandments: *eusebeia,* the principal command to worship God, and *dikaiosunè,* the right relationship with one's fellows, which sum up all the separate commandments.[91] Thus the Greek Jews juxtaposed two sets of commandments. Love of one's neighbour was not a second main commandment but epitomized all of them, whereas formerly love of God had constituted the ground and source of all other obligations, including love of one's neighbour: loving God meant keeping the commandments. This gave [250] rise to the question of 'two great commandments', which made the intrinsic relation between love of God and ethics (keeping commandments) problematic[92] − a result of the influence of the Greek twin concepts: *eusebeia* (piety) and *dikaiosunè* (ethos). In late Judaism the common expression was: God and the Law, more in line with Deuteronomy. This made the transition to 'love of God' and 'love of the neighbour' possible.

In the Old Testament 'the neighbour' means all sorts of things. In the earliest texts it is a compatriot or social peer; later on, the poor or the lowly, less important and socially inferior fellow countryman, needing protection; finally, for every Israelite all members of the nation are the 'weak', entitled to help: all are brothers. According to the final redaction of Deuteronomy the way one should behave towards the poor is extended to all fellow Jews; that is to say, over and above all laws, love of one's neighbour is a brotherly, protective, loving attitude towards every member of God's people. In addition an inward disposition of loving kindness is mandatory.[93] For the sapiential writers and the prophets 'the neighbour' meant primarily the poor in society. So in Lev. 19:18 we read: you shall love your fellow as yourself; wish every man whatever he wishes for himself; only then can universal peace prevail in Israel (although very early, this outlook was already influenced by Hellenism). In the

[91] Berger, *Gesetzsauslegung,* 165-166.
[92] l.c., 63-208.
[93] L.c., 81-91.

Septuagint the concept of neighbour (*ho plèsion*) was refined in various ways. In secular Greek it meant the 'person next door', one's closest people, ultimately the other person you happen to meet. Thus the Jews of the Diaspora expanded neighbourly love to universal love that included everybody. 'My neighbour' is each and every person I meet (a consequence of the Diaspora Jews adapting to their gentile surroundings, as well as intensified faith in the God who created everything and everybody). Love for the members of a sociologically circumscribed community, on the other hand, came to be called brotherly love; this kind of love was maintained within subgroups (even in the later New Testament writings love of one's neighbour gradually makes way for brotherly love among Christians). Eventually Greek Jews (branded 'misanthropes' by pagans)[94] replaced the *dikaiosunè,* in its Greek combination with *eusebeia,* with *philanthropia*: all social obligations towards real-life individuals (not a generalized humanistic ideal).

[251] In the so-called inter-testamental literature the two 'great commandments' (Dent. 6:4-5 and Lev. 19:18) are already conjoined, not so much on the basis of Scripture but under the influence of the twofold Greek notion, 'Love the Lord and your neighbour' or: 'Love the Lord and every person with your whole heart',[95] where love of the neighbour is understood in a universal sense: the accent is on *pas anthrôpos*.[96] Thus the patriarchal Testaments put an end to Jewish particularism; indeed, the eschatological prophet (albeit coming from Israel) is a light for the whole world. Israel will be the world's teacher.

The amalgamation of two great commandments, therefore, was the work of Greek-speaking Jews; elsewhere, among the Aramaic Jews, we do not find it. It follows that the actual problem formulated in Mk. 12:28 and parallels could only have emerged in the admittedly very early Greek-speaking section of the early church; it merely links an intra-Judaic problem with belief in Jesus Christ.

The so-called 'golden rule' (Mt. 7:12) likewise was of non-Jewish origin but was assimilated into Judaism via Hellenism.[97] In the Hebrew text of Sir. 34:15 it says (by way of commentary on Lev. 19:18): 'Be friendly towards your friend as towards yourself'; the 'golden rule' is introduced into the Greek text at this point: try to look at the other man's situation with his eyes; put yourself in his place. This rule came to be regarded as the summary of all ethical precepts (as also in Mt. 7:12).

Hence the issue in Mk. 12:28-34, where Deut. 6:4-5 and Lev. 19:18 are conjoined, is neither specifically Christian nor peculiarly 'Jesuanic', as the

[94] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 153.
[95] Testamentum Issachar, 5:2 and 7:6; Test. Gad, 5:3; Test. Benjamin 3:3,4; 4:4. Berger, l.c., 126-127.
[96] Test. Zabulon 7:2; 8:1; 5:1; 6:4; Test. Benjamin 4:2; Test. Issachar 7:5; 7:6.
[97] A. Dihle, *Die Goldene Regel* (Göttingen 1962), 117-125.

scribe in fact admits (Mk. 12:32). Indeed, Luke the Hellenist puts the response into the scribe's mouth, not Jesus', and Jesus simply endorses it (Lk. 10:26-28). In its presentation of the issues Mk. 12:32-33 is Greco-Jewish. Thus the scribe is told: 'You are not far from the kingdom of God' (12:34). So what does he still lack? 'After that no one dared to ask him any question' (12:34b). What Mark is secretly getting at is that he lacks faith in Jesus.[98] So the discussion in Mk. 12:34 and parallels does not go back to Jesus or the Old Testament and Hebraic Judaism (a more Hebraic aspect is presented by the triad in Mt. 23:23: *krisis, eleos, pistis* − justice, mercy and faith − cited there as 'the weightiest matter of the Law', that is, neighbourly love). It is part of Hellenistic-Jewish tradition, in particular that of its catechesis for proselytes. Keeping the two commandments, in other words, maintaining a proper relationship with God [252]
(*eusebeia*) and with men (*dikaiosunè*) qualifies a person as *hagios* and *dikaios* (of Jesus, in Acts 3:14; of John the Baptist, in Mk. 6:20; in the Song of Zechariah in Lk. 1:75, where *hosiotés* is synonymous with *eusebeia;* also Lk. 2:25; of the catechumen, Cornelius, in Acts 10:22; also Acts 10:35; again in 1 Thess. 2:10; 1 Tim. 6:11; Tit. 2:12; 1 Jn. 4:20-21; or in a negative sense, *asebeia* and *adikia,* in Rom. 1:18). In both concepts love of God and love of neighbour are combined. In tradition history all such passages can be traced back to Greek Judaism. It also implies that obligatory law is already limited to the decalogue (invariably cited quite uncritically as the norm of moral conduct; Mk. 7:10; 10:11-12,19); Christians do not even feel obliged to expound the purity laws allegorically. Love of God requires fulfilment of the ethical 'ten commandments of God'. That is how they interpreted Jesus' critical attitude towards the Law in terms of Greco-Jewish thinking.

Mark 12:29-31 presents the two great commandments hierarchically (*prōton-deuteron*); this too is Greco-Jewish. Matthew 22:39, as well as Lk. 10:25-28 (which combines the two 'objects' of love under the single, unrepeated 'you shall love'), puts the two commandments on a par. The rest of the New Testament, however, is not much interested in this question: almost every reference is to love of one's neighbour, and ultimately just to brotherly love; that is more Hebraic-Jewish (here the two duties are not seen as chief commandments, together summarizing the Law).

All this indicates that the Greco-Jewish principle of the 'twofold commandment' was only relatively widespread in early Christianity (in the Q tradition it is unknown).[99]

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[98] Cf. Psalms of Solomon 6,17-20; here too being near God and entering the *basileia* are associated with keeping the Law.

[99] Clearly enough, in the Q text of the eschatological 'woes' Lk. 11:42 has: 'justice (a right attitude to one's fellow human beings) and the love of God', in other words, the Greco-Jewish dual notion; but this is Lukan editorializing; the parallel passage in Mt. 23:23b mentions as 'the weightier matters of the law': *'krisis, eleos, pistis'* that is, 'justice, mercy and faith(-fullness)', actually Hebraic-

With respect to Jewish Torah orthodoxy the formula of the 'two great commandments' functions as a Christian criticism of the Torah; this twofold commandment is the yardstick and criterion for assessing and judging every law (Mk. 12:28-34; see immediately below). Using the categories of the existing Greco-Jewish interpretation of the Law, the Christians could accurately reflect the impression that Jesus' attitude towards the Law had made on them − all the more readily after A.D. 70, when Hebrew orthodoxy had clearly gained control and the conflict with Christianity grew more acute. The point of the story in Mark is this: Jesus is authoritatively expressing the (in fact Greco-Jewish) principle of the two great commandments; the intention is
[253] christological. A particular (Greco-)Jewish tradition is put into Jesus' mouth, because 'the nearness of God's kingdom' also entails 'right doctrine' (see Mk. 12:34), that is, the doctrine of the Christian church.

Does this pericope simply reflect a general recollection of Jesus' approach to life, in the sense of God's reign (thus: love of God) centred on human wellbeing (thus: the requirement of love of one's neighbour)? The Greco-Jewish great commandments indeed encapsulate the praxis of the kingdom of God. But does the core of this logion derive from Jesus? The quotation from Deut. 6:4-5 in Mk. 12 tallies with neither the Greek nor the Hebrew version of Deuteronomy. It seems plausible, therefore, that it is an allusion to the Jewish prayer formula of the *Shemah Yisraël,* although that makes no connection between love of God and love for men. Moreover, in Mk. 12:33b the mention of the two great commandments is followed, significantly, by: 'that is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices'. What does that mean in this context? Clearly it is a criticism of the cult: love of God and ethics outweigh all the cultic requirements of the Torah − the very thesis of the Greco-Jewish inter-testamental literature,[100] also associated with the ancient prophetic critique of the cult (1 Sam. 15:22; Hosea 6:6; also in the Wisdom literature: Prov. 16:7 and in apocalyptic Dan. 3:38ff). For Matthew 'I desire mercy and not sacrifices' (Hosea 6:6 LXX) is (9:13; 12:7) already a Christian programme. Plainly then, the Greco-Jewish doctrine of the 'two great commandments' is used by Mark on the one hand to encapsulate Jesus' critical attitude towards the Law, on the other to vindicate the early church's praxis in regard to Israel. Thus Mk. 12:29-33 relates love of God and the neighbour to aloofness from cultic rules (the temple cult). This also suggests the teaching of the 'Stephen' Hellenists in the mother church (see Acts 6:11,13,14). Thus it affirms that concurrence with these two great commandments and their criticism of the cult is the very kernel of

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Jewish terms for one's whole relationship to other people (love of one's neighbour), which again in Mt. 7:12 is the quintessence of the Law. This, it would seem, reproduces the actual text of Q. Luke does not understand this Hebraic triad and substitutes for it the Greco-Jewish twofold idea (love of God and a right way of relating to human persons).

[100] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 192-202.

Jesus' message of the reign of God (Mk. 12:34).

A comparison of Mark with the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke highlights the differences between the three evangelists' use of this pericope. Mark 12:32-34 does not appear in Luke and Matthew: they do not emphasize the cultic criticism of the two great commandments; furthermore, their version of the pericope differs strikingly from Mark's.[101] Mark, it seems, was using a tradition which mentions only the first commandment − love of God − in the sense of the first question in the catechesis of the Diaspora, which concerns the [254] conversion of gentiles to the one true God. The Markan gospel links this with the general Jewish understanding of neighbourly love as a summary of the Law, thus importing the Greco-Jewish twin notions of love of God and of one's neighbour. Mark's aim is to enumerate the principal commandments drawn from all God's requirements for human salvation (Mk. 12:28-31). To this end he also locates the Greco-Jewish dual commandment (*eusebeia* and *dikaiosuné*) in Scripture. They are put into Jesus' mouth as evidence of his normative authority (without glossing over the fact that the twin commandments come from elsewhere). Thus Mk. 12:32-34 is a scribal commentary on Mk. 12:28-31: that is, on the basis of these two commandments the cultic and ritual regulations of the Torah have been fundamentally modified (in that respect concurring with Matthew's quotation from Hosea 6:6). Here a Greek and late Judaic view of the Law emerges: everything that the Torah does not subsume under the decalogue and the love commandment is a human law that can be radically criticized (cf. Mk. 7:10). An intra-Judaic, albeit Greco-Jewish, notion of the Law is deployed against Judaism itself after the separation of church and synagogue.[102] The Matthean tradition and redaction, on the other hand, posed the question from the start against the background of the late Judaic conception of *nomos* or law: 'Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?' (Mt. 22:36). 'Law' here is the decalogue, not the Torah as a whole. For Matthew the two great commandments are the foundational principles undergirding the entire decalogue and imbuing it with meaning (cultic critique falls away, because the cult does not even fall under the late Judaic concept of *nomos*): 'On these two commandments depend all the Law and the prophets.'[103]

In Matthew the scribe is really asking about criteria to distinguish important

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[101] Certain words unusual for Matthew (e.g. *'nomikos'*) point to a tradition common to Matthew and Luke – not, however, the Q tradition, but one parallel to the pre-Markan tradition, where the twofold commandment is already present. In contrast to Mark, there is no reference to Scripture. All this goes to show that Mk. 12:32-34 is more or less secondary to an older phase of tradition on which Luke and Matthew evidently depend.

[102] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 506-507.

[103] *'Kremasthai'* (hang upon, be derivative from) means here something like 'depend for their existence', just as conclusions are derived from premises; they are the foundational principles of moral and religious life. 'Law and prophets' are 'inferable' from them but do not render the other obligations superfluous.

commandments. That is precisely what Jesus refuses to provide: the relationship between God and man is the crucial thing in every law; the whole Law hinges on that. Elsewhere Matthew says the same about neighbourly love alone (the golden rule: Mt. 7:12) in sapiential vein, as first explicitly formulated in the book of Wisdom 6:18. The meaning of every other commandment is grounded in neighbourly love. The Johannine gospel, being more in line with the Wisdom tradition, actually regards love of one's neighbour as the epitome of Christian living − even though it is already condensed into brotherly love
[255] among Christians: 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (Jn. 13: 34-35). Here 'love for one another' has already become an ecclesiological concept.

In Luke (as in John) the whole nexus of problems centred on the Law has fallen away; in the message of the gospel the two main principles are seen as 'a way of life' (Lk. 10:25). Besides, the dual commandment is not accentuated by appending the parable of the good Samaritan to it. Luke wanted to explain the meaning of the concept of 'neighbour' as inspired by Jesus (Lk. 10:25-29). Nor are the two great commandments put into Jesus' mouth; he simply endorses what a scribe says of his own accord. Luke's real concern is with the parable; only after that does Jesus answer the question: 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' (Lk. 10:25). The distinctively Jesuan feature of the parable is not the doctrine of the two great commandments. Luke intimates that we can read the single twofold great commandment perfectly well in the Bible without Jesus, but, cutting across that, we are given Jesus' teaching: the good Samaritan, concretizing that great commandment. Luke completely inverts the concept of 'neighbour' (from LXX Lev. 19:18): the neighbour is not so much an object of action, but an active subject who makes himself a neighbour and helper for others. The relation between neighbours only comes about when we help and support somebody − when one person draws close to another. That is Christian neighbourly love, which is realized when we draw near to a fellow human in charity: bringing people together in unity, helpful communication, being friends to each other.

In Mark and in Matthew 22 the neighbour is simply 'the other' (in line with the Septuagint); in Lk. 10:36-37 (and Mt. 5:43-44) neighbour is understood more in the sapiential sense as 'friend' − but then in a Christian sense: someone of whom we make a friend (Q tradition). Besides, from Lk. 18:22-30 it seems that for Luke love of one's neighbour is concretized in charitable work and support of the destitute. Almsgiving is not a law in the decalogue, but a commandment of love (Lev. 19:18). Turning to God in repentance and helping the helpless − these are the fundamental commandments. Moreover, the one

who becomes a neighbour is a semi-pagan, a Samaritan!

Although the pericope of the two great commandments does not comprise [256] historically authentic Jesus material but rather a Greco-Jewish problem in certain early Christian circles, the issues are stated in terms of Jesus' authentic message concerning God's humane rule, and especially of Jesus' praxis of reverence for the Law on the one hand and his critical stance on legalistic ideology on the other. Hence the conclusion seems warranted that Jesus liberates people from an oppressive, narrow concept of God by exposing legalistic ideology as an orthodoxy divorced from orthopraxis, which has moreover turned ethics into a screen between God and man, totally obscuring the relevance of the Law to human salvation. Hence the repercussion of Jesus' message of God's reign on human ethics is characterized as a factor of truly human liberation, thanks to his novel, original experience of God.

B. JESUS' ORIGINAL *ABBA* EXPERIENCE, SOURCE OF HIS LIFE'S SECRET, MESSAGE AND PRAXIS

Literature. R. Beauvery, 'Mon Père et votre Père,' in *Refus du père et paternité de Dieu,* LVie, n. 104 (1971), 75-88; A. George, 'Le Père et le Fils dans les Évangiles synoptiques', LVie, n. 29 (1956), 27-40, and 'Jésus, Fils de Dieu dans l'Évangile selon saint Luc', RB 72 (1965), 185-209; P. Giblet, 'Jésus et "le Père" dans le IVe Évangile', *L'Évangile de Jean, études et problèmes,* RechBibl 3 (Louvain 1958), 111-131; W. Grundmann, *Sohn Gottes,* ZNW 47 (1956), 113-135, and 'Zur Rede Jesu vom Vater im Joh.', ZNW 52 (1961), 214-230; F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 280-346; B. van Iersel, *Der Sohn;* see also NovTSuppl 3 (1964); J. Jeremias, *Abba. Studien zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen 1966); and 'Das Gebetsleben Jesu', ZNW 25 (1926), 123-140; T. de Kruyff, *Der Sohn des lebendigen Gottes* (Analecta Biblica, 16) (Rome 1962); W. Marchel, *Dieu Père, dans le Nouveau Testament,* Paris 1966, and *Abba, Père, la prière du Christ et des chrètiens* (Analecta Biblica, 19) (Rome 1963); A. Mitscherlich, *Auf dem Weg zur Vaterlosen Gesellschaft* (Munich 1970); A. W. Montefiore, 'God as Father in the synoptic gospels', NTS 3 (1956-1957), 31-46; C. Orrieux, 'La paternitê de Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament', LVie, n. 104 (1971), 59-75; J. Pohier, *Au nom du Père* (Paris 1972); P. Pokorný, *Der Gottessohn* (Theol. Stud., 109), Zürich 1971; H. Ringgren, s.v. ab, ThWAT (Stuttgart 1970), 1,1-19; G. Schrenk, s.v. *Pater,* in ThWNT V, 946-975, 996-1004; R. Schäfer, *Jesus und der Gottesglaube. Ein* [257] *christologischer Entwurf* (Tübingen 1970); S. Schulz, 'Das Vaterunser', *Q-Quelle* (84-93), esp. 87-88; A. Vergote, 'Le nom du Père et l'écart de la topographie symbolique', *Le Nom de Dieu* (ed. Castelli) (Paris-Rome 1969); − s.v. *Huios* (P. Wülfing von Martitz, G. Fohrer, E. Schweizer, E. Lohse, W. Schneemelcher), ThWNT VIII, 334-400.

Without venturing a futile attempt to psychoanalyse Jesus (we do not have the necessary data), his message and praxis tell us enough about his self-understanding: his conduct is inspired by extraordinarily pronounced consciousness of a prophetic role, on which is grounded his message of the approaching reign of God, while in and through his own miraculous ministry he clearly sees that this kingdom is drawing near. The first thing that strikes us is Jesus' Jewish spirituality. Exegetes often tend to make much of the Old Testament, whereas we are given a distorted picture of (late) Judaism, particularly that of Jesus' own time. As a result Jesus' relation to Judaism is equally distorted; besides, one forgets that the Old Testament was not functioning independently but in the context of late Jewish piety as it had become in the meantime. One cannot simply skip over the time that had elapsed between the great prophets and Jesus. From both Jewish and Christian 'exegesis' at the time it is clear how people read the Bible or were nurtured by it in a hermeneutic horizon and perspective on life that had changed greatly over the intervening period. They lived according to traditions rather than by 'a book': the 'Isaiahan tradition' (Isaiah, deutero- and trito-Isaiah), Deuteronomic spirituality, sapiential piety, apocalyptic piety, Levitic priestly spirituality, et cetera. An appraisal of sheer legalism, as well as one of apocalyptic fanaticism, gives a false picture of the Judaism in which Jesus lived. There is no need to ignore Jesus' criticism of real aspects of Jewish piety (we have already seen that his criticisms were clearly differentiated and based on implicit assent to Israel's institutions and law); he blamed his fellow Jews not so much for their lack of 'orthodoxy' as for an ideological attitude, in which theory and practice drift apart and concern for ordinary folk is lost sight of. But we must not first paint a heavy undercoat to create a dark background
[258] against which Jesus will sparkle all the more luminously in the foreground. Jesus was filled with the Jewish passion to look for God's will in everything. His God was Israel's God; the God of the patriarchs and prophets, Israel's God, who lived on in apocalypticism and in the piety of Pharisees and Essenes. Yet this contained gravely distorted concepts of God, because in practice the late Judaic trend towards religious separatism and elitism denied God's universal love.

Jesus' distinctive relation to God was expressed in the early Christian churches' use of the honorific title 'Son of God' and 'the Son'. These were Christian identifications of Jesus of Nazareth after his death. Jesus never spoke of himself as 'the Son' or 'Son of God'; there is no passage in the synoptics pointing in that direction; what is certain is his idiosyncratic reference to God as *Abba*. To discover Jesus' own relationship to God, therefore, we are thrown back on Jesus' message and praxis and on his prophetic self-understanding, which can also be regarded as a historical fact. In other words, we have to

depend on what at first sight might be called 'indirect' evidence. Actually this accords with the anthropological insight that people are only understandable to themselves and to others through their actions.[104] For although Jesus never set himself up (alongside the reign of God) as the second subject of his proclamation, the business that occupied him and with which he identified disclosed his self-understanding. To us this is not a blind spot in the luminous revelation of his message and praxis. If God's reign as proclaimed by Jesus was embodied in his conduct and way of life, then there is already a discernible relation − albeit requiring further delimitation − between the Jesus' person, his message and his conduct; then he is never entirely separable from his message and ministry. A post-Easter confession can *start* by saying that Jesus is God's great act of salvation in this world, and on that basis go on to interpret his words and deeds. That way of talking about Jesus is based on an attempt to identify him and understand his life in its totality. But our purpose is to follow the way of Jesus from Nazareth, along with his disciples as it were, right up to his death and in that way (and again 'as it were') to share the birth of the faith-inspired interpretation of Jesus the Christ. Secondly, we are looking for traces in Jesus' life that, for us as for the disciples, could invite us to assent in faith to what is indeed God's great saving work in Jesus of Nazareth. The result is not [259] to 'legitimize' our faith; but it does mean that we can critically monitor the legitimate 'emergence' of (or perseverance in) our own Christian faith.

To go in search of someone else's original, unique religious experience is a precarious undertaking. That happens (a) when the person expresses his experiences directly (something Jesus never did, according to the available sources of knowledge about him); for then we face the problem of the relationship between the authentic experiential element and its clarifying interpretation, which are inextricably intertwined without coinciding in self-evident or transparent identity; and (b) when somebody does not articulate such experiences directly, but speaks about God and his cause in such a way that he intimates or discloses his personal religious relationship with God. This is particularly difficult in the case of religious experience, because we are then trying to fathom the mystery of a person; we are looking for the reality with which he identifies his heart, his mind and life, his whole personal existence that synthesizes his life − in other words, what makes him this particular person and grounds his personhood. The mystery of a person is only accessible to us in his behaviour, which is an inadequate sign of the person manifesting and at the same time concealing himself in it. It is more than his individual

[104] *'Kremasthai'* (hang upon, be derivative from) means here something like 'depend for their existence', just as conclusions are derived from premises; they are the foundational principles of moral and religious life. 'Law and prophets' are 'inferable' from them but do not render the other obligations superfluous.

actions, yet is disclosed only *in* these activities.[105] This does no prevent these acts from providing a slant on the mystery of a fellow human being in the insuperable ambivalence of history.

For all these reasons, even before one starts, it is a risky business to want to infer Jesus' distinctive sense of sonship and his religious experience of God from his striking (and historically no longer debatable) custom of calling God his *Abba*. Historians and exegetes agree that the unqualified, absolute use of *Abba* in prayers to God is to be found neither in rabbinical literature nor in official late Jewish liturgical literature.[106] In Jesus' time *Abba* was a family designation for one's earthly father; it started off as baby talk, but gradually found its way into adult speech.[107] Hence that Jesus should call God *Abba* − apart from the great solemnity keeping God at a distance from men, with which people in Jesus' time used to pray to him[108] − makes no essential difference. In 3 Macc. 6:3, 8 we do find simply *pater,* in an absolute sense,
[260] although it was still exceptional at the time and evidently a new trend in first century Greek Judaism. Palestinian Jewry was very conservative in this respect, particularly insofar as 'fatherhood' evoked the correlate 'son'. Of course, God was called the Father of the Son, the king, in the sense that royal legitimacy depended completely on God's authority − hence (under democratizing influences) Israel as a whole was called 'son of God' in relation to God the Father; but Palestinian Jewry had strong reservations about that on account of pagan conceptions of religious father-son relationships.[109] Thus late Judaism was reluctant to accept the Old Testament of 'messiah=son of God'. Yet God's fatherhood was increasingly accepted, however seldom it occurred

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[105] Gusdorf has (in general terms) given sharp expression to the dialectics in our knowledge of other persons: 'The crucial element in man becomes apparent (…) in that he rebuts every identification, every equation. Find a formula and you have contained the reality of a thing, its consistency. We are given to wanting this or that definitive determination – and then, when it turns up, to rejecting it... A *thing* appears to us in total exteriority, the exterior is everything. But the exterior of a person takes its entire significance from one's interior. In itself it is never enough. It points to a *personal surreality* of which it is *always an incomplete sign.* The only value of any formula given in this circumstance is as a reference. Yet a human being is nothing apart from the formulae in which he is enfleshed . . .' (l.c., 293; transl.)

[106] J. Jeremias, *Abba,* 163; Kittel, in ThWNT I, 4-5; Marchel, *Abba, Père,* 115; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 87, etc.

[107] Indeed (like all father- and mother-words) *ab* had its origin in baby talk, as following Köhler in ZAW 55 (1937), 169ff, H. Ringgren maintains in the recent Old Testament lexicon (l.c., col. 1). The Aramaic *abi* had fallen out of use and been replaced by *abba,* in the sense of 'the father', 'father', 'my father'. That *abba* signified 'dad', in a diminutive and affective sense ('daddy', 'Vati'), is affirmed in particular by J. Jeremias (*Abba,* 59-60 and 163) and subsequently adopted by many others: Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* 122; Kittel, in ThWNT I, 4-5; Schrenk, in ThWNT V, 985; Marchel, *Abba, Père,* 115; but later on retracted by J. Jeremias *(The central message of the New Testament* (London. 1965), 21); further study of the Aramaic tongue and its history led him to see that (as in many languages) this 'childish' character of *abba-daddy* had vanished long before and that in Jesus' time *abba* was the ordinary, familiar form of address also used by adults when speaking to their father.

[108] See Strack-Billerbeck, IV-1, 208-249.

[109] E. Schweizer, sub *Huios,* in ThWNT VIII, 357, and P. Pokorny, *Gottessohn,* 22-25.

in the earliest strata of the Old Testament (in contrast to neighbouring religions). Apart from a few instances (which nonetheless point to a new tendency), *Abba* (a secular term, after all, taken from family life) does not occur in Jesus' time as a word to address God in prayer. So there can be no question of Jesus standing out in the history of religion purely on the ground of addressing God as *Abba*.[110] Jesus' unique relationship with God undoubtedly lies in its unaffected simplicity; and in late Judaism signs of that, though not absent, were extremely rare. But it does not provide a basis for inferring Jesus' sense of some 'transcendent' sonship and still less a trinitarian doctrine, as has often happened in exegetical and theological writings. That would require more. If we can find that more, then Jesus' unaffected intercourse with God as *Abba* may justifiably be seen as the natural consequences of it; not, however, the other way round.

Exegetes seem to have established scientifically, with some substantiated if cautious assurance, that Jesus' practice of calling God *Abba* − in the Greek gospels cited only once in the Aramaic (Mk. 14:36; later on in the Christian church's prayers only twice: Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15) − was in fact consistent, and that we should presuppose this same Aramaic word underlying the Greek 'the Father', 'Father' or 'my Father' in Mt. 11:25-26; 26:39,42; Lk. 10:21; 11:2; 22:42; 23:34,46, besides the explicit reference in Mk. 14:36 to 'Abba, the Father'.[111] J. Jeremias and B. van Iersel have shown convincingly − insofar as that is possible in a matter of this sort − that *Abba* is one of the most historically authenticated words used by Jesus.[112] Besides, in twelve places in the gospels (not counting parallel passages) we read that Jesus addressed himself in prayer 'to the Father'.[113] In view of the rarity of an *Abba* prayer in that period, this evidently occurred under pressure of Jesus' prayerful approach to God as *Abba.* It is unmistakably characteristic of Jesus, without *in itself* implying some [261] kind of theological transcendence. The correlate 'the Son', as applied by Jesus to himself, cannot be demonstrated critically from the New Testament, while the evident distancing of 'my Father and your Father' (Jn. 20:17) is unmistakably post-Easter, Christian theology. Yet this (Johannine) distinction between 'my Father' and 'your Father' rests on Jesus' own distinction between *Abba* (my Father) and 'the Father in heaven', the latter being used when talking to other people about (their) God.[114] It would be even more wrong to link his

[110] Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* 122; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 88.
[111] B. van Iersel, *Der Sohn,* 100-103; W. Marchel, *Abba, Père,* 130-138.
[112] J. Jeremias, *Abba,* 59 and 163; van Iersel, *Der Sohn,* 103.
[113] (a) In the thanksgiving for God's revelation to 'the little ones' (Mt. 11:25-26; Lk. 10:21; cf. Jn. 11:41); (b) in Gethsemane (Mk. 14:36; Mt. 26:39; 26:42; Lk. 22:42); (c) on the cross (Lk. 23:34; 23:46); (d) in the Johannine high-priestly prayer (Jn. 17:1,5,11,21,24,25). See W. Marchel, *Abba*, 132-8.
[114] See G. Schrenk, in ThWNT V, 987; van Iersel, *Der Sohn,* 108.

Abba concept with the expression 'Truly, I say to you'[115] in order to lend (added) force to the transcendence of Jesus' self-understanding and his claims.

What we gather in the first instance from our historically certain knowledge of Jesus' praying to God as *Abba* is the unconventional style of Jesus' intercourse with God, its unaffected simplicity, which must have been inscribed on the hearts of the disciples, because this *Abba* prayer at once became prevalent in early Christianity. Both the pre-Markan tradition (Mk. 14:36) and the earliest, Aramaic phase of the Q tradition regarding the 'Our Father' (Lk. 11:1-4; Mt. 6:9-13, where the 'Father' in Luke appears to be a Q text and 'our Father in heaven' more Matthean) speak of 'Abba' in totally different tradition complexes (Mk. 'Abba, the Father', *abba ho patèr;* Lk. simply *pater* in the vocative, without the article). That the Christian community ventured, like Jesus, to address God as *Abba* means that they did *not* infer the uniqueness of Jesus' sonship directly from his *Abba* experience (but from other data about Jesus), whereas the Johannine gospel − after a longer period of Christian consciousness of the exclusive uniqueness of Jesus' sonship (John usually refers to Jesus simply as 'the Son') − feels obliged to make a distinction: *'my'* and *'your'* father, in order to underscore the difference in sonship in the two cases. Early texts like Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6, where we find (disregarding Mk. 14:36) the unusual double expression 'Abba, Father' − pointing to a pre-Pauline tradition (possibly conjoined with the tradition included in Mk. 14:36, from bilingual northern and eastern Palestine, as well as bilingual West Syria, Damascus) – specifically as a prayer formula used by *Christians,* indicate on the one hand that the first Christians were so struck by Jesus' way of praying to God that they adopted it themselves, but on the other that at that stage of their profession of Christ they did not base Jesus' exclusive sonship on his
[262] remarkable *Abba* experience. The (nonetheless already current) identification of Jesus as the Son or Son of God must therefore derive from other sources. In short: Jesus' *Abba* consciousness was not the immediate, sole ground for calling him 'the Son'. (Ultimately that ground − see below − lies in the resurrection, at any rate interpreted as exaltation and 'investment with authority', with corroboration from Ps. 110, Ps. 2 and Ps. 89, which could only have happened *partly* through remembrance of Jesus' familiar intercourse with God as *Abba* and his eschatological, prophetic mission from God.)

[115] As, following J. Jeremias, *Abba,* 148-150, do Käsemann, in *Besinnungen,* I, 209 and M. Hengel, *Nachfolge und Charisma,* 77. Both V. Hasler, *Amen. Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Einleitungsformel der Herrenworte 'Wahrlich, ich sage euch'* (Zürich 1969), and Berger, *Amen-Worte,* have shown that in apocalyptic circles 'truly, truly I say to you' is an expression typical of people (visionaries) who do *not* speak on their own authority but have to legitimate that authority. Now this is not something that characterizes Jesus. To the extent that the 'truly I say to you' utterances become more plentiful in the synoptics they are secondary: they appear to come from an apocalyptic, Greco-Jewish Christian milieu and to remain more or less restricted to it.

In Part One (criteria) we said that however historically authentic Jesus' use of *Abba* may be, we cannot deduce the historical authenticity of the rest of the logion in which Jesus prays to the Father from that alone. Yet it is still important to examine how, according to the New Testament, Jesus prays to God as Father, in other words under what aspect Jesus approaches God as Father.

For a Jew *Abba* as an ordinary, secular term for one's earthly father suggests primarily paternal authority: the father is the one with complete authority, *exousia*, to whom children owe obedience and piety. The father is also there to look after and protect his own, the family, to come to their rescue and provide counsel. He is the focus of the entire household (paternal house), everything revolves around him and, through him, forms a community. There is no disputing paternal authority in Judaism. Children must 'gladden' their father (Prov. 15:20; 23:22,25).[116] Another result was that everything belonging to the father belonged to the son as well, and vice versa. (These were actually technical formulae in the family: 'What is mine is yours, yours is mine'; see for instance the parable of the elder brother of the prodigal son, Lk. 15:11-32.) The Wisdom literature in particular emphasizes the son 'being instructed by' the father (Prov. 1:8; 6:20; 10:1); the son receives 'the teaching of the father' (Prov. 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 7:1). 'Hear, O sons, a father's instruction ... for I give you good precepts: and do not forsake my teaching' (Prov. 4:1-2). For that reason 'father' is also applied to Israel's teachers and priests. The fourth commandment in the decalogue was interpreted mainly as a duty to comply with paternal precepts. A son's relationship to his father was laid down in law. From the age of majority (thirteen) reverence for the father remained operative 'until death' and even beyond, because for a year after his father's death a son had to offer sacrifices on his behalf. To sum up, one can say that in Jesus' time what *abba* [263] signified for his son was authority and instruction: the father is both authority and teacher. Being a son meant 'belonging to' and one demonstrated sonship by carrying out the father's instructions. Thus the son receives everything from the father. Since failure to comply with the father's will is tantamount to rejecting the Torah or the Law, this established a connection between obeying one's father and obedience to God (Sirach 3:2,6; 7:27; Prov. 1:7, 8). The son also receives 'missions' from the father, tasks which he has to perform on his father's behalf.

When, in contrast to the usage current in his day, Jesus uses the familial term *Abba* in addressing God, it followed that the core of his religious life had to be expressed exactly as the Christians did after his death: 'Not my will, but your will, Father' (Lk. 21:42; Mt. 26:42), for that was the Jewish *Abba* concept. With

[116] J. Pedersen, *Israel. Its life and culture* (London 1926-1940).

good reason, looking back on Jesus' life, they could have him say: 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me' (Jn. 4:34), 'Lo, I have come to do your will' (Hebr. 10:9), 'I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me' (Jn. 5:30), 'I have come ... not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me' (Jn. 6:38). This is simply applying (albeit in the sapiential context of the Johannine gospel) the familial concept of father and son to Jesus' relationship to God, apprehended as *Abba.* These explications are justified by the characteristic experience and awareness of the Father which the disciples had observed in Jesus' religious life and which for them reflected the essence of his religious genius so clearly that the early, bilingual church liturgically addressed the God of Jesus, hence its God, as *Abba, Pater.*

'Doing God's will' was also the key tenet of Jewish spirituality. But it involved not so much the idea of 'a father's will' as the ineffable, in Jesus' time unmentionable 'name' of the Most High. If God is to be called 'Father', one must immediately add to it 'Master and Lord of the universe' or something of the sort, for instance, 'Father who art in heaven', as at one remove Matthew frequently does.[117] Jesus' familial expression for God, *Abba,* without any further qualifications suggestive of 'transcendence' ('Lord', 'King', 'in heaven', 'creator of heaven and earth') definitely points to a religious experience of close intimacy with God, in which Jesus seemed to be aware of a distinction between his experience of God and, for instance, his disciples'. In the gospels 'Our Father' never occurs on the lips of Jesus; the single text, Mt. 6:9, is (a) clearly Matthean, and (b) one in which Jesus is teaching his disciples how to
[264] pray. But such expressions as 'their Father' (Mt. 13:43) and especially 'your Father'[118] occur constantly; Jesus himself, on the other hand, says 'my Father' in the gospels (17 times in Matthew; 4 times in Luke; 25 times in John). This consistent linguistic usage in the gospels, then, does not necessarily imply direct, historically authentic logia of Jesus; it is a kind of literary deposit, distilled from Jesus' earthly ministry and sayings.

The most poignant instance of the sapiential familial father concept is found in the (wrongly attributed) Johannine logion in the synoptic gospels: 'I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth for hiding these things from the learned and wise and revealing them to the simple; yes, Father, for such was thy choice. Everything is entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son and those to whom the Son may choose to reveal him' (Mt. 11:25-27; Lk. 10:21-22, NEB). The distinction between the Jewish father formula: 'Father, Lord of heaven and earth' (in both Matthew and Luke) and 'Father' (manifestly *Abba)* used on its own is very obvious here (even though we cannot attach any peculiar

[117] Van Iersel, *Der Sohn,* l.c., 96-103, 106-109; Strack-Billerbeck, II, 49-50.
[118] Mt. 6:8,15; 10:20,29; 23:9; 5:16,45,48; 6:1,14,18,32; 7:11; Lk. 6:36; 11:13; 12:30,32; Mk. 11:25.

significance to the former, that is, Jewish usage in this pericope). Many have described this pericope as 'Johannine' because they maintain that it does not accord with the synoptic image of Jesus and tends to evince the high-sapiential christology of the Johannine gospel. This question will be explored in connection with the wisdom Christology and particularly the messenger concept and the eschatological prophet (Part Three). The substance, however, is very early; we find it even in the Greco-Judaic phase of the Q tradition.[119] In Part Three I will explain that wisdom Christology divides into a low- and a high-sapiential variety, according to whether the messenger 'from God' is sent by Wisdom or is identified with it. It also appears from this wisdom tradition that the father-son relationship is an element of the tradition complex of 'revelation' and 'sending the messenger'. We find this tradition of low-sapiential Christology in the Q logion (apothegm), whereas the Johannine gospel is high-sapiential. The sapiential familial 'father-son' concept is simply subsumed under the sapiential 'messenger' concept. Here two logia have probably been interwoven: the prayer formula and the revelation logion. In the latter it is first said that Jesus has received *exousia* or full authority from the Father; which is why he is the sole mediator of God's revelation, and the 'little ones' or the Christian (Q) community are its sole recipients. The fact that Jesus thanks the Father for this revelation to the elect is given a christological basis in the second logion; in other words, Mt. 11:27 is a christological comment on Mt. [265]
11:25-26. Because scholars used to pose religio-historical questions and disregard tradition history, this pericope has been much debated; the only way to understand it is to locate it in tradition history. The passage is Hellenistic Judaeo-Christian, completely compatible with the Old Testament, late Jewish, Chasidic heritage,[120] in which the revelation comes to the humble poor, whom Jesus also called blessed − not (the Q community maintains) to the leaders of Israel who rejected Jesus' message; to them Jesus' end-time message is not disclosed. They have shut themselves out. But that is included in God's decree. In the second instance it is interpreted christologically in Mt. 11:25-26. The unqualified use of 'the Father' and 'the Son' is exceptional in the Q source, but in no way 'Johannine';[121] it is in line with the low-sapiential notion of the messenger as 'sent by Wisdom', although the tradition of the *exousia,* conferred by God on the son of man (core of the Q theology), certainly plays some part in

[119] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 213-228.

[120] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 217, n. 280, n. 284. See also S. Legasse, 'La revelation aux nèpioi', in RB 67 (1960), 321-348.

[121] Already Van Iersel, *Der Sohn,* 151; now also Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 220-2, and especially Kl. Berger, 'Zum traditions-geschichtlichen Hintergrund christologischer Hoheitstitel', in NTS 17 (1970-1971), 391-425, esp. 422-424. See also Hoffmann, *Q-Studien,* 88-90. J. Jeremias, *Abba,* 47-54, sees in the passage simply the ordinary *abba* concept, with the Father instructing the Son. At all events this is certainly the essential meaning, although when incorporated into diverse tradition complexes it presents differing perspectives.

Mt. 11:27a. Thus in the Q theology 'the Son' means that Jesus is 'the Son' because he is given *exousia* by the Father to pass on the 'teaching of the Father' to whomever he chooses: the Son is both wholly dependent and wholly free. He is also the sole communicator of revelation. 'The Son' in an absolute sense is not late Judaeo-Palestinian but Greek(-Jewish), and exhibits clear parallels with 'Wisdom' in the Book of Wisdom (6:12- 9:18; 10:10; 12:1). In tradition history the logion belongs to the distinctive wisdom Christology of the Greco-Jewish Q community and so exhibits traits of a pre-Johannine milieu (in which wisdom and apocalyptic merge). As the eschatological emissary of Wisdom, equipped with full authority, Jesus knows what the Father knows and what he has to convey to mankind: in him Wisdom dwells, so he knows the eschatological secrets, the 'mystery of the kingdom [reign] of God' (see Lk. 8:10). Thus the Q community conjoined its older tradition of the son of man with the (to it more recent) tradition of Greco-Jewish Wisdom (*chokma*) − although still low-sapiential; in other words, in the Q theology there is as yet no question of identifying Jesus with Wisdom, and thus of his pre-existence.

As it stands this is post-Easter Christology, yet with recollections of Jesus' pre-Easter life. In Mk. 6:2-3, after Jesus had been discoursing in the synagogue, the question was raised: 'Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom
[266] given to him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon? ... And they took offence at him' (see also Mt. 13:54-56, and Jn. 6:42 and 7:27). The logion is meant to answer that question: they do not know Jesus' Father; therefore they cannot properly identify Jesus. For his real *Abba* is God, who has taught him this wisdom. Matthew 11:27 may well at one time have formed part of Mt. 13:54-56, as the pericope in Jn. 7:27-29 might suggest.[122] Behind these pericopes lies a problem dating back to Jesus' life on earth: 'Who is he?', 'Whence this power?', 'Whence this speaking with authority?' So in essence at any rate (the Greco-Jewish phrasing, after all, is too patent to attribute it directly to Jesus) Mt. 11:27 may be called an authentic Jesus saying. Here Jesus himself adopts the Jewish 'messenger' concept, but within and arising out of his *Abba* experience; and this evidently goes deeper than purely prophetic consciousness. In other words, we can see here that we cannot make inferences from Jesus' *Abba* experience as such, but only from that experience as the soul, source and ground of Jesus' message, praxis and ministry as a whole: that alone clarifies the extraordinary character of the *Abba* experience (which, as we said above, is itself rare enough in late Judaism). By what authority, on what basis was Jesus able to speak of *God* in this manner? That was the question raised by his fellow Nazarenes (Mk. 6:2-3). Jesus' experience

[122] Van Iersel, *Der Sohn*, 154-161; he regards Mt. 11:27 therefore as authentically belonging to the historical Jesus.

and awareness of the Father in prayer was manifested in a manner that astonished his listeners, so much so that some took offence at it. It was not in his use of *Abba* as a way of addressing God that Jesus showed himself to be forsaking late Judaism; but the *Abba* form of address (expressing a special religious experience), when linked with the substance of Jesus' message, ministry and praxis, was raising theological questions. The *Abba* experience would appear to be the source of the peculiar nature of Jesus' message and conduct, which without that religious experience, or apart from it, would lose its distinctive, authentically Jesuanic content and meaning.

The foregoing shows that one of the most reliable facts about Jesus' life is that he broached the subject of God in and through his message of God's coming reign; and that the implication is clarified primarily by his authentic parables and the issues they raised: *metanoia* and the praxis of God's kingdom. In addition this message was substantively amplified by Jesus' praxis; his miracles, his dealings with tax collectors and sinners, his offer of salvation [267] from God in table fellowship with his friends, his attitude towards the Law, sabbath and temple, and finally his fellowship with his intimate group of disciples. The crux appeared to be the God oriented to humanity. Jesus' whole life was a celebration of that God's reign, as well as an orthopraxis in accord with that kingdom. The bond between the two − God's reign and orthopraxis − is so intrinsic that in this praxis Jesus recognizes the signs of the coming of God's reign. The living God is the focus of this life.

Against the background of the apocalyptic, Pharisaic, Essene and Zealotic conceptions upheld in movements which isolated themselves in 'remnant' communities, Jesus' message and praxis of salvation for all Israel without exception – indeed, specifically including the lost − are difficult to place in a historico-religious context. For that reason we need to determine whether Jesus' message and praxis do not become intelligible only if we presuppose his special, original religious apprehension of God. For the question is: whence does Jesus derive the unequivocal assurance of human salvation to which his message of God's coming reign so positively testifies?

The calamitous, pain ridden history of which Jesus was part offered no grounds or, indeed, any reason at all to explain and make sense of the unqualified assurance of salvation that characterized his message. For Jesus such a hope, expressed in **his** proclamation of the coming, imminent salvation of men implied in God's rule − now that we have uncovered the unique quality of his religious life in terms of his (historically exceptional) *Abba* address to God − is quite plainly rooted in a contrast experience: on the one hand the incorrigible history of human suffering, a history of calamity, violence and injustice, of grinding, excruciating and oppressive enslavement; on the other hand Jesus' special religious awareness of God, his *Abba*

experience, his intercourse with God as the benevolent, caring opponent of evil − anti-evil**,** who will not admit the supremacy of evil and refuses to allow it the last word. This religious contrast experience ultimately informs his conviction and proclamation of God's liberating reign, which should and can prevail even in our history, as Jesus experienced in his own praxis. Thus his *Abba* experience, although meaningful in itself, is not a self-subsistent religious experience, but is also an experience of God as Father, caring for and offering a
[268] future to his children, giving a future to those who, from a this-worldly viewpoint, can be vouchsafed no future at all. From his *Abba* experience Jesus is able to bring men a message of hope not inferable from the history of our world, from individual or socio-political experiences − although the hope will have to be realized even there. Jesus became explicitly aware of such a hopeful prospect and assurance from his novel experience of God, fostered in the religious life of Jewish followers of Yahweh through the ages, but in Jesus distilled in a characteristic *Abba* experience. In Jesus the core of what was enunciated in the finest moments of Israel's experience of God is condensed in an original, personal way: Yahweh is the coming one, who for the present declines to submit his credentials but leads Israel towards a future: 'I shall be who I shall be' (Ex. 3:14). To believe in this God is to put one's trust in one who takes his identity seriously (hence the Torah as a revelation of God's will) and at the same time declines to disclose his identity 'in advance'. Having been reared in that tradition, Jesus, being a new phenomenon in Israel, apprehended this God as a power opening up the future, the benevolent antagonist of evil, one who says no to all that is bad and harmful to human beings – in Judaism 'creating' means making something good, so that one sees 'that it is good, very good' − and therefore wills good for suffering humanity and its history. Jesus' *Abba* experience was an awareness of God as a loving power that sets people free. Against the background of historical facts *Abba,* the 'God of Jesus', is the creator of heaven and earth and Israel's leader, a God with whom 'everything is possible' (Mk. 10:27). Jesus called men to faith in this God through what he said and did during his days on earth: that was the point of his ministry.

That is why trying to erase the special 'relation to God' from Jesus' life at once destroys his message and the whole point of his praxis; it amounts to denying the historical reality 'Jesus of Nazareth' and turns him into an 'unhistorical', mythic or symbolic being, a 'non-Jesus'. Then all that remains − insofar as a Jesus trimmed to measure still has power to fascinate − is just the apocalyptic utopia. Indeed, those in Jesus' apocalyptic environment believed that from our history − the 'old aeon' − no further good was to be expected. Their hope centred on the turnabout of the ages (see Part Two, Section One), a sudden act of God radically shattering history so as to allow a few favoured
[269] ones to escape the catastrophe. The purpose of apocalyptic was paraenetic

encouragement. Its beatitude was: 'Blessed are those who endure to the end' (Dan. 12:12). Apocalypticism is the threat of an all-consuming judgment on our negative history; it remains within the dialectics of the history of suffering and wrong that calls for vengeance − and that too will follow. The pious 'remnant', however, lives in the utopia of escaping that vengeance. Even the Baptist, at bottom no apocalypticist, announces no positive hope, only the certainty of the coming judgment. All this is essentially and fundamentally different from what Jesus did: on the basis of his *Abba* experience he promised and held out positive hope for mankind.

Conclusion and definition of the problem: reality or illusion?

In this chapter we have analysed the fundamental and constitutive elements of Jesus' message and praxis. He proclaimed the dawn of God's salvation for man; he appeared and acted as the eschatological prophet bringing God's 'glad tidings for the poor', news of salvation for all Israel, but by the same token especially joyous for the poor, destitute as they were of any prospect of a new and better life. He proclaimed the reign of God, oriented to humanity and demanding a corresponding practice exemplified in his own life and one that he articulated in parables and instructive discourses. He identified himself with the cause of God as that of man (God's reign, which man has to seek first before everything else), and with the cause of man as God's cause (the kingdom of God as a kingdom of peace and wellbeing among men). By that he lived, by that he was fulfilled; that was what he promised men: humans are beings cherished by God. Thus there is positive hope for everyone without exception; and in both passing and constant contact with this Jesus many found salvation and healing. Many found a new life; they were able to hope once more and renew their lives. For that Jesus did not even lay down conditions, really. Whoever came to him in suffering or distress experienced salvation 'for free'. Wellbeing and a future were vouchsafed to future-less people.

The source of this message and praxis, abrogating an oppressive concept of God, was his *Abba* experience, without which the picture of the historical Jesus is totally mutilated, his message emasculated and his concrete praxis (though still meaningful and inspiring) robbed of the meaning he himself gave to it.

On the other hand one could say that this very *Abba* experience was the [270] grand illusion of Jesus' life. Such a reaction is certainly possible on our side. But then one is bound to draw the conclusion that the hope of which Jesus spoke is likewise an illusion. Anyone, therefore, who lives by Jesus and bases his life on him − while disregarding Jesus' *Abba* experience − is in fact wanting to live by a utopia: he is actually pinning his own hopes on someone who, two thousand years ago, lived and died for an illusion and a utopia. I am in no way

denying the historical power and inspiration exerted by utopias, especially not when they prompt consistent concern and effort for the good of others (as they certainly did in Jesus' case). What I am saying is that we would then have no basis − anywhere − for ever believing in a better world and a definitive 'final good', and that all our expectations of a universal reign of peace are just the utopian obverse of our negative history of discord, injustice and suffering. No doubt that has a powerful critical function; but it contains no real promise on which positive hope can be founded.

To base one's own life on the trustworthiness of Jesus, and ultimately of his *Abba* experience (through which Jesus discovered the ground of his own life in God) is, therefore, an act of faith in Jesus, which is − ipso facto − an attestation of faith in God. On purely historical grounds this cannot be verified, since such an *Abba* experience may be disqualified as an illusion. On the other hand, for those who acknowledge and, in faith, confess Jesus' trustworthiness as grounded in truth and reality, it acquires visible contours in the actual life of Jesus of Nazareth; their faith then discerns Jesus' trustworthiness in the material, biographical data about Jesus of Nazareth which the historian can submit to them. At any rate, this material confronts everyone with the question: could this person have been right?

Is it at all possible, on the basis of a profound religious relationship with God, apprehended as creator of heaven and earth and as a God intent on the good of humanity, to say something about man, maybe the most important thing that can be said about human beings? For that was what Jesus claimed. On the basis of a religious claim − in no other way − he said something about men and their final good.

So far this is merely a question, for the story of Jesus' life is not yet told. His message and his person were rejected. He was tried and executed, legally
[271] exterminated. And this poses more sharply, more bewilderingly, the question: was his life after all a utopian illusion, maybe the saddest proof that positive hope of a better world and a better mankind is futile? The question will be examined more closely in the next section; and so we must defer for the present our identification of who, in the final analysis, Jesus is.

Section Two

KINGDOM OF GOD, REJECTION AND DEATH OF JESUS

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Chapter 1

REJECTION AND DEATH OF JESUS

Introduction: the problem

We can construct our view of Jesus' death both on the basis of the life that preceded it and in terms of God's relation to his death, as the first Christians, although not unmindful of his terminated life, did in various ways, culminating in the canonical documents of the New Testament. The first approach responds to a historical question, so it can only be assessed by the methods of historical criticism. The second presupposes a religious attitude; but again understanding of this religious interpretation − that is, the early Christians' evaluation of Jesus' death as articulated in the language of the New Testament − requires historical study and exegesis. In this chapter we deal with both the historical reconstruction and the religious interpretation.[1] [274]

The scientific outcome of historico-exegetical studies has been growing consensus on three clearly divergent attempts by the early church to evaluate and understand Jesus's death. These three traditions are recognizable in the New Testament; with their help it is still possible to reconstruct the initially independent traditions of Christian interpretation, although we cannot provide a detailed chronology of the three ways of regarding Jesus' death.

§1 The death of Jesus as interpreted in early Christianity

All the gospels stress that Jesus went to his death of his own free will. One even sees this emphasis on the voluntary aspect gradually increasing. 'Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand' (Mk. 14: 42); Jesus forbids his disciples to resist and surrenders himself 'in order that the Scriptures be fulfilled' (Mt. 26:52-56); Jesus steps forward voluntarily, Judas' treacherous kiss is no longer mentioned. Jesus makes his authority felt and declares explicitly that he

[1] Thus we examine first the post-Easter reflections on Jesus' rejection and death in the New Testament; and only thereafterthe pre-Easter way of envisaging this rejection and death. Theological consideration of the whole – our understanding here and now of this Jesus event – will be covered in Parts Three and Four.

accepts the cup of suffering (Jn. 18:4-11).

The New Testament offers three explanations of the motive actuating Jesus' voluntary acceptance of his suffering and death: he died the death of a prophetic martyr; in terms of salvation history Jesus' death is part of God's plan of salvation; and, thirdly, his death brings salvation: it reconciles God and men, in other words, **it** is a sacrifice.

A. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL PROPHET-MARTYR: CONTRAST SCHEME

In this (historically probably earliest) view the action of the leaders of his co-religionists in killing Jesus is contrasted with his exaltation by God. The principal grounds for this interpretation are: Acts 4:10 and, already mingled with other strands, Acts 2:22-24; 5:30-31; 10:40; the Christology of the Q community, which does not discuss Jesus' death but, insofar as it alludes to it,
[275] sees it as part of Israel's tradition of killing its prophets;[2] and lastly, probably also the peculiarly Lukan tradition: Lk. 13:31-33; 11:47-48,49ff. Although we find this contrast scheme mainly in Luke (gospel and Acts), it is pre-Lukan and features in independent segments of tradition. It is undoubtedly a Jewish viewpoint, but is expressed primarily in the controversy between Jews and Jewish Christians sent to convert them. Here the emphasis is exclusively on God's act, manifested in the exaltation of Jesus: God reveals himself in this rejected prophet. This tradition ascribes no salvific significance to Jesus' actual death.

This interpretation of Jesus' death is part of a much broader tradition that opens up more profound perspectives: that of the martyrdom of God's prophet and the rejection of his message. 'Israel kills its prophets' crops up frequently throughout the New Testament.[3] This view derives from a pre-Christian, Jewish tradition, perpetuated in later rabbinic writings. The problem is that the general statement that prophets were murdered is not borne out by historical facts. Many prophets did suffer persecution, but only a few were put to death. The first Old Testament passage to mention the murder of all prophets is Neh. 9:26.[4] It ascribes a violent death to all prophets in the period of the Israelite monarchy. There the reference is to pre-exilic prophets: their call to repentance and conversion was rejected. The reason was the disobedience of the whole people of God; it was a protest against the prophetic message, a murder of prophets. That refusal evoked Yahweh's punitive judgment; for now God's patience, which he had shown by constantly raising up new prophets with

[2]Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 265-267; 343, 433, 486; see Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 382.
[3] Mt. 5:11-12 par. Lk. 6:22-23; Mt. 23:29-36 par. Lk. 11:47-51; Lk. 13: 31-33 and n.: 34-31 par. Mt. 23:37-39; Lk. 11:49ff.
[4] Steck, *Gewaltsames Geschick,* 60-80.

their summons to repentance, was at an end.[5] This view reflects a salvation-historical interpretation of Israel's pre-exilic history. The catastrophes of 722 B.C. (fall of the northern kingdom) and 587 B.C. (fall of Jerusalem) are interpreted as God's punishment for Israel's disobedience to the message of the prophets. Thus the killing-the-prophets theme coincides with the conviction of the persistent disobedience of (pre-exilic) Israel as a whole.

Apart from Neh. 9:26 the theme is reiterated in Chronicles, as well as in the penitential prayer in Ezra 9:10-11.[6] But the motif itself antedates the works of the chroniclers and goes back to the Deuteronomic interpretation of history.[7] The point of departure for this development was 2 Kings 17:7-20, which contains some theological reflections on the fall of the northern and southern kingdoms: Israel had been disobedient in not heeding the admonitions of the [276] prophets. This Deuteronomic theme of Israel's general disregard of the prophets' message was later rendered in the work of the chroniclers in a sweeping statement about the murder of prophets.

Important to our understanding of the martyrdom of the prophet Jesus is that in this tradition prophets are defined as propounders of *metanoia* or repentance and obedience to God's law; failure to do so must incur God's judgment. It is the crux of John the Baptist's message and its essence is repeated by Jesus, though in another perspective. It was a view generally current in the inter-testamental literature, although probably less pronounced in Jesus' time. In apocalyptic writings this motif was associated exclusively with the eschatological, final summons to repentance by the end-time prophet.

The early Christian tradition, which interprets Jesus' death as the fate of a *metanoia* prophet − fully in line with Israel's calamitous history − confirms the idea that, even before Easter, Jesus came across to the disciples as a great prophet. The term 'prophet' in this late Jewish tradition meant someone who called for observance of the 'true law' of God, for in some strata of Judaism the notion of God's law in the sense of manmade laws because of the obduracy of Israel was already a sign of Israel's defection in the last days.[8] Jesus is the end-time prophet acting in the face of Israel's final disaffection and calling for a crucial, definitive volte face.

Another striking feature is that, over against the idea of the *christus* or end-time envoy from God, since the Maccabean period – especially in apocalyptic circles – the notion of an end-time antagonist of salvation had taken shape: the antichrist. This contestant would bring misery upon Israel, would oppose the Law of God (Dan. 7:20; 7:25). In 1 Macc. 1:44-49 his activity is depicted as

[5] Ibid., 62-63.
[6] The same idea is still at work in Jer. 25:4a,5-6; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15 44:4; themselves all occurring in a Deuteronomic complex of tradition. Also Zech. 1:4-6; 7:7, 12: 2 Chron. 36:14-16.
[7] Steck, ibid., 64-67.
[8] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 15.

'against the Law'. The abrogation of the Law, the sabbath, the sacrificial cult and the feast days features prominently in early Christian literature as well.[9] Stephen was stoned because he had spoken blasphemous words against Mosaic law and God (Acts 6:11) and against the place, that is, Jerusalem, the temple with its sacrificial worship (Acts 6:13). This indictment corresponds to that of Dan. 7:25 against the great Accuser! These words uttered against the holy place (see Mt. 26:61 and Jn. 2:19) may have their origin in the (effective) prophetic tirade against the city that will not believe in Jesus. The combination
[277] of 'curse upon Jerusalem' and 'speaking against the law of Moses' corresponds to a similar combination in Dan. 7:25. The same elements are also found in the charge against Paul (Acts 21:28).

This suggests that for the Jews the confrontation with Jesus' ministry raised the question: is this Jesus of Nazareth the end-time prophet, or is he the end-time pseudo-prophet, the antichrist (see Mt. 12:24ff)? In early Christian literature we read that Jesus, too, had abolished the Law and the temple (in particular the sabbath and Jewish feast days),[10] manifestly the hallmark of an end-time pseudo-prophet. Already in the Jewish *Liber antiquitatum* [11] we read of a 'temple made with human hands', explicitly connected with Israel's defection at Sinai. It appears from Acts 17:24-26 that these sayings are not aimed primarily at Judaism; they stem from an early Jewish apologetic missionary tradition which explains the transcendence of the God of the Jews above the manmade gods of the heathen. The new element is that the Jewish traditions of law, sabbath, temple and feast days had already been disqualified by Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora: they saw these Jewish laws as a compromise with heathen idolatry.[12] The idea that the 'secondary laws' were given by Moses because of the 'hardened hearts' of the Jews came via various channels from Deuteronomic spirituality (Ezek. 20:25). From a Hellenistic Jewish standpoint, Moses at Sinai had given the people these laws because of Israel's obduracy: temple, sabbath, feast days, sacrificial cult, letter of divorce. These compromise laws coincide with the part of the Law abolished by Antiochus IV − an attitude endorsed by liberalizing Hellenistic Jews in opposition to the others, in particular those who spoke Aramaic. Historically this would seem to be a realistic accommodation to a Persian government which, in religious matters, was not in the end so very hostile. The Diaspora Jews had already spoken of a universal defection of Israel, because it had added the laws of men to God's decalogue and so had laid on human beings a burden that infringed God's will, the ten commandments. These Jews therefore

[9] Ibid., 18.
[10] Acta Philippi, 15, p. 8. Also Justin, *Dial.* 18:2.
[11] Pseudo-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum,* 22, 5.
[12] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 19.

considered a return to the 'true law' of God mandatory.[13] In some apocalyptic circles the addition of the secondary laws was attributed to the work of the great Adversary, 'the dragon', who had first caused the angels to defect, then Adam and finally the whole people of God. Hence the prophets, who called men back to the true law as it was 'in the beginning', were persecuted. It was the Adversary who hardened the heart of the people, so that they set up a [278] golden calf and became disobedient to God's own – not manmade – laws.[14]

The New Testament, then, presents the adoption by Christians with a Hellenistic-Jewish background of a pre-Christian, Greco-Jewish tradition, particularly evident in Mark 10[15] where this general view is applied to the letter of divorce. We have to bear in mind, therefore, that in the Palestine of Jesus' day there were two fundamentally different interpretations of the Law. Since the one that deviated from official Judaism was favoured primarily by Greek-speaking Jews, the synoptic discussion of Christians opposing the Law is partly informed by this Hellenistic-Jewish view, which does not in itself supersede that of Judaism as a whole. Naturally the viewpoint of the Diaspora Jews was vigorously rejected by the rest because of its affinity with the laws of Antiochus IV. On the strength of the apocalyptic tradition oriented to Daniel 7 it was possible to associate the Hellenistic-Jewish group (with its own Greek synagogues) with the 'great Adversary', who led the people astray and egged them on to abandon the Law.

It is plain from the controversies in the New Testament that Jesus' opponents regarded him as the great Adversary, the pseudo-prophet and false teacher of the last days, enticing Israel to defect. Jesus, we hear, is an 'impostor', a teacher of falsehood (Mt. 27:62-64; Jn. 7:12; cf. Test. Levi 16:3; Test. Benjamin 3:3); he 'blasphemes against God' (see Mk. 14:64; Lk. 5:21; 22:65). Mt. 27:62-64 shows that Jesus' identification with the teacher of falsehood is not only refuted by a reference to his resurrection, but that the Christians turned the same argument against his opponents: they are the impostors, they seduce the people and slander the saints (Mk. 3:28), they have nullified God's law in favour of laws made by men (see Mk. 7:8; 10:1-2); they tempt Jesus himself, just as the Adversary seeks to corrupt the righteous.[16] Again pre-Christian, Jewish material is incorporated into a Christian context, namely the contrast between God's law and the laws of men on the one hand (Mk. 7; see 2 Macc. 7:30), and on the other the universal defection from the 'true law' as a sign of the last days.[17] Because of the law of the villainous Adversary men came to regard the

[13] Ibid., 21.
[14] Ibid.
[15] In particular, Mk. 10:5. See also H. Braun, *Spätjüdisch-häretischer und frühchristlicher Radikalismus*, II, 108-114; Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung*, 508-575.
[16] Mk. 8:11; 10:2; 12:15; Mt. 16:1; 19:3; 22:18,35; Jn. 6:6; 8:6; see Wis. 2:24.
[17] Especially: the Coptic Peter-apocalypse, c. 1; Acta Philippi, 141 (pp. 82, 24-26), in which other

'new law', Jesus' message, as the false prophecy of a pseudo-prophet, indeed of the great Adversary himself.

[279] In the judgment of this complex of New Testament tradition Jesus was condemned as the (pseudo-)prophet of the last days, the Adversary who misleads the people and causes them to apostatize. That is why these Christians saw Jesus' death as the martyrdom of the eschatological prophet from God, while those who put him to death are themselves disqualified as adversaries and deceivers of the people. In the four gospels the question current in Jesus' lifetime is still apparent: who is the true emissary from God, who has genuine *exousia* or full authority − Jesus or Israel's leaders, his de facto opponents?[18] The conflict is fought by citing Jesus' sayings and miracles in a recognizably Hellenistic-Jewish context. From the basic form (e.g. Mk. 6:1-2, 5,15) it is possible to gather the gist of it: Jesus is portrayed as the doctrinal authority in contrast to his opponents, while all secondary interpolations are meant to expose Jesus' opponents as those who gainsay God's true law.

In the gospels this exposure of Jesus' opponents is closely bound up with the traditional idea of the prophet's martyrdom. His martyrdom reveals that it is not Jesus but his opponents who are the adjutants of powers opposed to God.[19] These complexes of New Testament tradition are clearly based on the idea of divine sanctioning of Jesus' authority or its endorsement by God, namely, through his martyr's lot; on the other hand (in a secondary phase of the same tradition) the Jewish teachers are themselves pronounced tools of the great Adversary. The synoptic altercations about God's law, therefore, are not just doctrinal disputes but express the struggle between the end-time prophet and the anti-divine power.[20] Paul translates this tradition into the larger theme of Jesus' conflict with the powers of this world, the celestial world of evil spirits, ultimately with Satan.[21]

In light of Jesus' martyrdom the post-paschal Christian community understands the relief of de facto authority in Israel not so much as a 'factional debate' but as the predicted struggle between the anti-God powers and the end-time prophet. In this Christian view, supported by existing Jewish traditions, Jesus' plenary powers and valid authority are confirmed by his resurrection and exaltation, as well as his earlier miracles. In line with the Deuteronomic tradition of the fate of prophets, interpreted as the inherent consequence of Israel's failure to obey God's true law, Christians see Jesus'

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traditions have been incorporated.

[18] It has been established above that the issue of total authority goes along with the cleansing of the Temple; see Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 91-98.

[19] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung*, 24.

[20] Cf. Apocalypse of Elijah, p. 163 (Berger, l.c., 24-25).

[21] Source of the interpretation of the doctrine of redemption as victory over the evil spirits. See G. Aulen, *Christus Victor* (Les religions, 4), Paris 1949.

authority legitimated. Jesus is *the* authority; whoever denies him is against God.

Of the two existing Jewish expositions of the Law that the early Christian [280] tradition incorporated into the New Testament, certain local church traditions − those of Greek-speaking Jews − clearly opted in favour of the so-called 'liberal' interpretation: a rigorous interpretation of God's will as revealed in the decalogue on the one hand, and on the other a less stringent, more attainable by the 'man in the street' interpretation of the Mosaic laws insofar as they were the product of a historical compromise prompted by the Jews' hardness of heart. Those traditions the Christians linked with Jesus' martyrdom, for which orthodox Jews were held responsible. Acts 7:51-53 says: 'You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One ...'

In view of Jesus' accepted and 'scripturally' proven authority the early Christian exposition of Jesus' death, relying on existing Jewish categories concerning the martyrdom of the prophets and 'rising again' of the prophet Elijah, saw his Jewish opponents as antagonists of God: you killed him, but God gave him his protection, raised him up and exalted him on high.

In an early Christian tradition the defection from the Law, of which orthodox Jewry accused the Jews of the Diaspora, is turned apologetically into a *Christian* indictment of this official Jewish tradition, which itself claimed Mosaic authority. The apocalyptic cliché about an end-time defection from the Law is turned against *them.* Jesus' death, which is laid at the door of 'orthodoxy', is in fact expressive of the 'lost state' of the Jews, manifested in a false conception of God's 'true law' that actually leads to disobeying God.

This earliest Christian interpretation of Jesus' death implies that, in the eyes of law-abiding Jews, Jesus' days on earth were historically ambivalent and he was fully vindicated only by his resurrection. Only his martyrdom makes it possible to fit his person and ministry into the framework of a traditional, that is Deuteronomic, view of the prophet. In this Jesus tradition, then, commitment to Jesus as the coming son of man is crucial to salvation. And the decision, not in and of itself but through the obduracy of those opposed to it, also leads in the end to social rupture, the secession of Christian Jewry from the Jewish synagogue.[22] The fierce controversies so clearly discernible in the four gospels are only understandable and conceivable as arising from the Christian [281] interpretation of Jesus as the end-time prophet of salvation, who died but, through his resurrection, was vindicated by God himself: Jesus confessed as

[22] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 26.

Lord. The memories of early Christian-Judaic traditions preserved in the New Testament are in their very acerbity symptomatic of a Christianity in process of breaking away from Judaism.

Historically the reason for the *Christian* inquiry into the salvific implications of the Law – the core of Pauline theology – is only understandable if we proceed from an early Christian-Judaic interpretation of Jesus, itself based on the Deuteronomic conception of Jesus' lot as a prophet rejected by Israel. This is incontestably a post-Easter interpretation; in light of this Deuteronomic interpretation, Jesus of Nazareth was the end-time prophet, the eschatological teacher of the Law, who as the last prophet became the victim of Israel's defection in keeping with the tradition of the classical murder of prophets: the authentic messenger, because of his critical and contentious character, is executed as the false prophet and deceiver of the people. The ever ambivalent and ambiguous implication of every human, historical event is used to ensure Jesus' undoing. So far from being a neutral interpretation of Jesus' death this first motif − the 'contrast' scheme − is perhaps the interpretation that conforms most closely to the concrete facts when viewed in the long Jewish prophetic tradition.[23]

This explains why Jesus is represented in certain early Christian traditions as the champion of the 'true law', whereas Paul ascribes the salvific function, previously attributed to the Law, to Jesus Christ himself − without any essential opposition between the Jesus tradition and Pauline theology, despite differences in emphasis. After all, traditionally the end-time prophet and teacher of the true law was always the 'light of the world'.[24] This function of the end-time prophet, professed in some Jewish traditional circles, namely being the light of the world − that is, firstly of Israel but as a result also of the gentiles − is in fact the source of early Christian critical inquiry into the current relevance of the Law. Early Christianity offered diverse answers to this question: (a) in a late Jewish genre of gentile conversions to Judaism ('conversion visions') the New Testament manifestation stories are envisaged
[282] as the conversion of Jews to Jesus as the Christ, and (b) in another Jewish view the end-time prophet, like the Law, is interpreted as *lumen gentium,* a light to the nations. From the moment that Jesus was acknowledged as the end-time prophet in a Christian sense Jews who became Christians were confronted with the issue of the Law; the answer to that is the core of the gospel tradition.

[23] A typical prefiguring of this interpretation of Jesus' death in connection with Israel's failure to keep God's true law can be found in a Christian interpolation into the earlier Testament of Levi, 16: 2-4; see Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 26.

[24] See Isa. 42:6-7,16; 49:6,8-9,10; 51:4-6; 62:1 with 49:6; Sirach 48:10b; Paralip. Jer. 6:9,12; passages which are in part read together in *Joseph and Asenath,* p. 46: 18-19; in Pseudo-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum* 51:4-6; Test. Levi 14:3-4; Test. Zabulon, 9:8; in the New Testament: Acts 1:8b; Lk. 2:32; Jn. 1:9; 3:19-21; 8:12, and – applied to Jesus' apostles – in Acts 13:47; Mt. 5:14.

While for some early Christian traditions (especially the Q community) the eschatological prophet radiated the 'light of the true law' and faithfully interpreted it in judgment upon human laws, for Paul the risen Jesus Christ appeared and replaced the Law as light of the world. Thus in the Pauline view Jesus took over the salvific function of the Law (Gal. 1:16; 3:2-5, also Mk. 10:17-51). Illumination now came from the risen Jesus, who replaced circumcision − enlightenment through the Law. The conflict that was bound to arise sooner or later from the confrontation between the Law and Jesus was in principle entailed by the concept of *lumen gentium,* already the cardinal Jewish honorific title for both the Law and the end-time prophet.

As prophet of the last days and true expositor of the Law Jesus is the light of the world. The interpretation of his death as the murder of God's prophet testifies, therefore, to a view of Jesus' death which, instead of isolating it, puts it in the context of what came before it: his whole prophetic life. One might say that no intrinsic significance is attributed to Jesus' death as such, but that it expresses the fact that his person, ministry and prophetic career are the actual light of the world.

B. THE DIVINE PLAN OF SALVATION: SALVATION HISTORY SCHEME

In its catechesis the Christian community continued to reflect on the meaning of Jesus' death. The placing of that death in salvation history appears to stem primarily from the Markan tradition, more particularly from its synoptic material on the passion story. In this tradition complex Jesus' suffering and death are interpreted scripturally as a 'salvific economy', God's plan of salvation. A word that typifies this tradition is the divine *'dei'*: it 'had to' happen in this way; the Scriptures acquaint us with God's will concerning the fate in store for the end-time saviour figure. J. Roloff (following Tödt, Popkes and Hahn) provides some grounds for distinguishing between two sub-traditions in this salvation history scheme: (a) Mk. 8:31a; 9:12b; and Lk. 17:25. [283]
The primary form of this tradition is: 'The son of man must suffer many things and so enter into glory.' Constitutive elements are 'much suffering' and 'being glorified'. In this sub-tradition Jesus is a passive figure, standing as it were between two active subjects: the Jews on the one hand and God on the other; (b) Mk. 9:31a; 14:41c; and Lk. 24:7 (proper to Luke): 'The son of man must be delivered into the hands of the sons of men.' The constitutive elements of this block of tradition are the Aramaic pun on 'son of man' and 'sons of men', and the kerygmatic key term, 'be handed over' (*paradidonai*). In this subgroup the concept 'son of man' is *essential* (in contrast to the first subgroup). Here Jesus does not stand between two active subjects; the action emanates from God: God himself consigns Jesus to death − which reveals more profound (albeit not

for that reason chronologically later) theological reflection.

In the dual form of this interpretive framework explicit mention of the glorification or resurrection is not fundamental, as opposed to the contrast scheme; it is in fact omitted, except in a later, albeit already pre-Markan interpolation (Mk. 8:31). The salvation history interpretation of Jesus' death also stems from very early Palestinian church communities; its context, however, is not the controversy with the Jews (as in the contrast scheme) but the churches' catechesis − although initially it would have been prompted partly by the attempt to resolve and clarify the aporia of the crucifixion. The tenor of this early Christian tradition complex is captured in the Emmaus story (Lk. 24:13-32).

The church, which after the Easter experience confessed Jesus as the messiah, not only had to justify itself to the Jews, but as a Judaeo-Christian brotherhood it had to come to terms with Scripture, specifically Deut. 21:23: crucifixion is anathema, a divine curse. Paul explicitly cites this Old Testament passage (Gal. 3:13). Another pericope falling in this interpretive scheme is Mk. 2:1 to 3:6 and 12:13-27 where Mark uses five acts of Jesus to explain historically how Jesus came to be crucified. The earliest redaction of the synoptic passion narrative, still traceable in Mark 14 and 15, is also meant to shed light on the question: how could things have come to such a pass? Thus Jesus' suffering and death are interpreted as an event triggered by God, in which his hand is discernible.

This interpretive scheme includes an apocalyptic motif, not in the sense of an
[284] apocalyptic 'shall be' (i.e. an inevitable catastrophe, as in Dan. 2:28 LXX), but to characterize Jesus' death as an *end-time* event. After all, the woes and persecutions suffered by the just are signs of the close of the age and are under divine governance: Mk. 9:31; 14:21; 15:33, 38. Hence the scriptural evidence illustrates the divine 'must' of Jesus' death. The apocalyptic motif serves only to formulate the end-time, eschatological relevance of the 'must' of salvation history. The tradition never reports Jesus' suffering and death merely as an atrocious, absurd, more or less unholy and baffling event. The motif of the narrative is the actual fact (of Jesus' execution) as one that calls for meaningful interpretation. The Christian insight into the salvation-historical 'must' in fact gave rise to the passion narrative and formulations like those in Mk. 8:31a and 9:31a.

In its earliest form, then, the synoptic passion narrative, contains no trace of a soteriological motivation for Jesus' suffering and death; no salvific function is ascribed to it as a propitiation for sin. In this tradition the people are not those for whom or for whose benefit Jesus is delivered up, but those into whose hands he is delivered. Nevertheless, in their baleful action they are − unwittingly (Mk. 14:21) − caught up in God's saving act. In Mk. 14:41 and Lk. 24:7 being delivered 'into the hands of men' (Mk. 9:31) becomes 'into the hands

of sinners'; this looks like a secondary theological generalization, not a first manifestation of a soteriological interpretation.

A causal elucidation of Jesus' death in terms of salvation history is not a soteriologically final account (as e.g. in Rom. 4:25). If Jesus' death fulfils a function in this interpretive scheme, it can only be that his suffering and death confronted the disciples with the choice whether or not to affirm Jesus' passion as an event initiated by God and be ready to emulate it (Mk. 14:27, 38,66-72).

Also remarkable is that allusions to Scripture in this stratum of tradition are restricted to psalms about the suffering righteous one, who endures persecution but knows himself to be in God's hand.[25] The earliest, pre-Markan passion narrative interprets Jesus' suffering and death not in terms of the resurrection (Mk. 14:28 is a Markan redaction) nor of Isa. 53, at any rate when interpreted as suffering for other people's sins (Mk. 14:24 and the words of institution − Mk. 14:22-25 − come from a different source: the last supper tradition). By the same token the son of man Christology is set in a context of [285] persecution, martyrdom or suffering of the righteous (see Lk. 12:8-9 and parallels; Mk. 14:62 and parallels; Acts 7:56). The first subgroup in this second interpretive scheme seems to relate particularly closely to the Old Testament and inter-testamental tradition of the suffering righteous one.

This theme has a complex history.[26] Originally it was applied only to Israel's king, whose enemies lay in wait for him. But the king knows he is a *saddik* or righteous person, because he is saved by Yahweh from mortal enemies;[27] for this he gives thanks to God.[28] In this phase the sign of righteousness is not suffering or being threatened by enemies but divine deliverance from these dangers. Divine righteousness or justification (deliverance from suffering) is the sign of a righteous man (the king).[29] In later psalms (individual laments), in which the pious face trial or execution, they pray God to reveal their righteousness or faithfulness or to include them in his own 'righteousness'.[30]

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[25] Ps. 22:2; Mk. 15:34; Mt. 27:46; Ps. 22:8; Mk. 15:29; Mt. 27:39; Ps. 22:9; Mt. 27:43; Ps. 22:19; Mk. 15:24; Mt. 27:35; Lk. 23:34; Jn. 19:24; Ps. 41; Mk. 14:18; Ps. 42; Mk. 14:34; Ps. 69; Mk. 15:23, 26. See also J. Delorme, in *Lectio Divina.* n. 72, 137; A. George, in LVie 101 (1971), 34-9; E. Schweizer, *Erniedrigung,* 59-62; L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende Gerechte?* (SBS, 59) (Stuttgart 1972), 48-52.

[26] H. Dechent, 'Der "Gerechte" – eine Bezeichnung für den Messias', in ThStKr 100 (1927-1928), 439-443; L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende Gerechte?*, l.c., and *Der leidende Gerechte. Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Alten Testament und zwischentestamentlichen Judentum* (Forschung zur Bibel, 5) (Würzburg 1972), and *Der leidende Gerechte und seine Feinde* (Würzburg 1973); H. J. Kraus, *Klagerlieder* (Neukirchen 1960); E. Flesseman-van Leer, in H. Conzelmann, et al., *Zur Bedeutung des Todes Jesu*, 79-96; G. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, immortality and eternal life in intertestamental Judaism* (Harvard, Cambridge 1972), 49-143.

[27] Ps. 18:(21) 25 (verse 21 looks like an accretion to the Deuteronomically oriented verses 22-24; verse 25 is a resumption of verse 21).

[28] Ps. 18=2 Sam. 22.

[29] Cf. Ps. 143:1,11; 5:9; 31:2; 71:2; 119:40, where people pray for God's righteous aid.

[30] Ps. 5; Ps. 7; Ps. 17; Ps. 31; Ps. 25; Ps. 71; Ps. 119; Ps. 143.

Yahweh's help against their enemies is evident in punishment inflicted on the latter,[31] as well as in divine confirmation of the righteousness of the one who prays.[32] Later psalms, particularly after the exile, speak generally of God coming to the rescue of the pious in distress.

This motif acquires special significance in the situation of the oppressed and misunderstood prophets. The formal subject of the fourth *Ebed* song in deutero-Isaiah is not the 'suffering righteous one' but the 'suffering prophet',[33] who suffers on account of the message he brings.[34] Isaiah 53 is apparently already familiar with the traditional theme of the suffering righteous one: the 'suffering servant' is pointedly referred to as the righteous one.[35] Servant, minister and righteous one are interchangeable terms. One may conclude that the more general, existing motif of the suffering righteous one is applied in a special way (in Isa. 53) to the suffering and rejected prophet.

But the suffering (but exalted) righteous one only becomes a fixed formula in the psalms influenced by the Wisdom literature.[36] There the standard expression is, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous' (Ps. 34:20a), and the assurance: but God will deliver them from it all (Ps. 34:20b).

The Septuagint version seems to have a predilection for the idea of the righteous one who must suffer.[37] Here the idea emerges that the righteous,
[286] oppressed by the godless – the powerful and the rich − are also the *anawim,* the 'poor';[38] these expressions may derive from Jews of the Diaspora, whose faithfulness to the Law put them at odds with their environment. All this still has no bearing on a 'martyr theology', which apparently only emerged later. Manifestly akin to the martyr legends in Daniel and to the martyr theology is the legend of Susanna: Susanna, the innocent woman condemned to death but miraculously rescued by Daniel, is a suffering righteous one.

Even so, it is only in apocalyptic writings that 'glorification' as the correlate of the 'suffering righteous' concept is given clear expression.[39] But by then belief in the resurrection was already firmly established. A crucial text in the history of the suffering righteous motif is the book of Wisdom (Wis. 2:12-20; 5:1-7), the necessary inference being that the overall theme of 'suffering much' and 'being glorified' only became widespread – specifically in Palestine − during the first quarter of the first century BC. Originally, according to a study by Lothar Ruppert, the two parts (Wis. 2: 12-20 and 5:1-7) appeared to have

[31] Ps. 7:7-9a, 10b; 17:13-14; 35:24-26.
[32] Ps. 7:4-10; 35:23-28.
[33] Isa. 52:13-53:12; see L. Ruppert, *Jesus* (SBS, 59), 19.
[34] See Isa. 50:4-9 (third *Ebed* song). See also Habb. 1:4,13 and 2:4.
[35] Isa. 53:11.
[36] Ps. 34 and 37.
[37] L. Ruppert, *Jesus,* l.c., 21. See especially Ps. 9:29 LXX:*'meta plousion'*
[38] Prov. 19:22; 28:28.
[39] Ruppert, *Jesus,* 23.

cohered in a sort of diptych.[40] The assumption is that the violently executed righteous one referred to here (which could be regarded as an updating of Isa. 52:13-53:12) was originally a law-observing martyr (of Pharisaic persuasion or at any rate with a Chasidic affiliation). The enemies lying in wait for him were evidently liberally disposed Sadducees, who, objecting to his piety and 'righteousness' (Wis. 2:13, 16), end up murdering him (Wis. 2:20). But this righteous man − after what is probably an interpolation about his resurrection (inserted by the final redactor) − was taken up into heavenly glory, where he appeared as a witness to the guilt of his oppressors; he did not judge them, but in light of his glorification they were obliged to judge themselves (Wis. 5:1-7). The final redactor set this image in a new context (that of the theology of the poor − like the Septuagint translation, a product of Alexandria). The point is that the diptych in Wisdom is a reinterpretation to give topical relevance to the 'suffering servant of God' (Isa. 52:13 − 53:12).

Thus the suffering righteous one and martyrdom (initially two distinct traditions) were eventually conjoined, evidenced by the appendix to the fourth book of Maccabees (4 Macc. 18:6b-19) (late first century A.D.), which depicts the martyrdom of the seven Maccabean brothers as 'the suffering of righteous men'.[41] Here the way of the righteous through suffering to glory or resurrection is already envisaged as a divine plan of salvation: a divine 'must be', hence – so we are explicitly told − 'according to the Scriptures'.[42] We find the same idea in the (pre-Christian) Ethiopian Enoch.[43] The theme that emerges [287]
is that of a suffering righteous man's lament (heard and answered by God).[44] There the oppression and suffering of a righteous person are regarded as, from a this-worldly standpoint, his 'natural' lot: because they are faithful to the Law, the pious have a hard time in this world. But in apocalyptic style we are referred to the last judgment (Enoch 104:3): the righteous man's suffering is interpreted as a promise of eternal glory (Enoch 104:1-2, 4-6). In the period when most of the New Testament documents were written the inevitable suffering of the pious or righteous was virtually a Jewish dogma.[45]

In this (too) summary survey of the Jewish theme of the suffering righteous one three originally divergent lines of tradition finally converge: (a) the sapiential development, (b) the eschatological development, and (c) the apocalyptic tradition. I quote, in paraphrase: inspired by the dying agony of

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 24.
[42] 4 Macc. 18:15 cites Ps. 34:20a.
[43] Ruppert, *Jesus,* 24-25. We explained above how in the book of Enoch 'the righteous one' was identified in a later phase with the son of man (see Part Three).
[44] Eth. Enoch 103:5c, 6, 9b.c.-15; 104:3.
[45] Ezra apocalypse, 7:79,89,96; 8:27,56,58, and (Syrian) Baruch apocalypse 15:7-8; 52:6-7; see Ruppert, *Jesus,* 25-26 and Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* 109-143.

the deutero-Isaiahan servant of God *(Ebed:* Isa. 52:13-53:12), interpreted as martyrdom or the 'suffering of the righteous one', the apocalyptic line of development (first as a reflex of the persecution of the Chasidim in the Syrian religious conflict: Dan. 11:33-35; 12:1-3) results in texts that echo the persecution of the Pharisees under Alexander Jannaeus, that is, in an apocalypticizing tradition, source of the (present) book of Wisdom (Wis. 2:12-20 and 5:1-7), and finally in the moralizing books of the Ethiopian Enoch, and, via 4 Macc. 18:6b-19, in an assessment that the suffering of the righteous one is 'in accordance with the Scriptures'; this culminates in the great apocalypses of Ezra and Baruch which, in light of the ill-fated Jewish rebellion (66-72/73 A.D.) that brought Israel so much suffering, interpret this as the suffering of the righteous.[46] In the space of about a hundred years what was at first felt to be an aporia or the vexation and scandal of the pious in extreme affliction ended up, via the theory of zealous dedication to the Law (Ps. 119) and the Septuagint's theology of the poor, as a dogma of Judaic piety: the righteous and the pious are bound to suffer, but God will raise them up. Thus the suffering of the pious culminates in a pattern of expectation, in which the righteous man – arraigned, suffering, condemned to destruction − is assured of salvation and ultimate vindication by God.

It seems to me that these Jewish insights, acquired down the centuries (independently of Jesus of Nazareth), are irrefutable. In fact, these existing
[288] ideas helped the Jew, now become a Christian, to understand and place the life and destiny of the master he already venerated and worshipped in context; they certainly did not *cause* his veneration.

In the Old Testament and inter-testamental literature the appraisal of the history of human affliction manifestly grew and evolved. Initially the pious prayed God, in view of their (as the orthodox saw it, unjust) suffering and debacle, to protect them from such things: 'How long, O Lord?' (Ps. 13:2-3); but by the time of the later psalms the victim can hardly depict his affliction, adversity and frustration in sufficient detail (Ps. 22:7-22). This psalm piles every conceivable type of suffering onto the pious, who cry out to God: they are a paradigm of suffering despite their piety and righteousness. The primordial agony of God-forsakenness oppresses them.[47] Thus suffering becomes a paradigm, an archetype for everyone who is pious, faithful to the Law, to Yahweh. This acquires its full relevance only in the Diaspora situation. Yet in spite of suffering, the conviction grows: Yahweh is 'my rock' (deriving probably from the sacred, rocky hill of Zion, Jerusalem: the God of Jerusalem, Mount Zion). The primal image of the 'sufferer' therefore turns into that of the man rescued by God. Psalm 18 (=2 Sam. 22) is actually the earliest testimony to

[46] Ruppert, *Jesus,* 25-26; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* 84-85 and 138-140.
[47] Thus an exact formulation of Ruppert, *Jesus,* 31 and 41.

this Jewish conviction of the close link between archetypal utmost suffering and supreme exaltation by Yahweh (Ps. 18:8-20).[48]

Although the Jews established an intimate link between suffering and exaltation, later, relatively recent psalms cast doubt on the hope of deliverance (Ps. 39; Ps. 88). All the same the hope prevailed. Psalm 119, partly a loud cry of God-forsaken pain, is partly a paradigm of justness vindicated by God: 'However much oppression and distress afflict me, your commandments are my greatest joy. Close by are those who make plans for their attack, they are far from your law. You, Lord, you are nearby: all your commandments are truth' (Ps. 119:143,150-51). He, the pious man, is the sufferer; he does not even need God's confirmation of this. This new outlook is the result of a new appraisal of God. The pious man is harassed because of his zeal for the Law. In that respect Ps. 119 is a fundamental link in the evolutionary chain: what was once a bewildering aporia (because of the suffering of the righteous) now becomes a sign of election, the hallmark of divine affirmation.

When the motif of the suffering righteous one was conjoined with the apocalyptic theology of martyrdom (Dan. 11:33-35; Wis. 2:12-20) suffering and [289] deliverance or exaltation came to be closely associated; so the theology of the suffering righteous one, flowering as it did in apocalyptic literature, is deeply rooted in Jewish spirituality. What is new about the late Jewish interpretation is that the righteous not merely suffer, but suffer specifically because of their righteousness and fidelity to the Law (Ps. 119): the just *must* suffer by reason of their 'uprightness' (4 Ezra; Syr. Baruch). Only in late apocalyptic literature is glorification firmly linked with the suffering of the righteous.[49]

Does this Jewish conception of suffering have anything to do with the early Christian interpretation of Jesus' suffering and death?

The theme of a martyrological glorification (in which the *martyr* is glorified) does not feature in the early form of the pre-Markan passion narrative.[50] On the contrary, it is clear from Lk. 23:46 that this evangelist was scandalized by Jesus' being forsaken by God, as expressed in Mk. 15:34 and parallels. In that early passion story Jesus' role is never depicted as heroic, in contrast to Jewish martyr theology; he is the passive (suffering) object of other men's actions. The glorification referred to comes only after Jesus' death; the death itself has nothing heroic or intrinsically glorious about it. On the other hand the typical

[48] See also Ps. 30, 31, 40:2-12; Isa. 38:10-20; Jonah 2:3-10; Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 51:1-12. Finally, in a very late psalm: Ps. 34:20.

[49] Thus Ruppert, *Jesus,* 43-44, arguing against E. Schweizer, *Erniedrigung,* 21-33. See also Balz, *Methodische Probleme,* 44-45.

[50] Luke on the other hand depicts the story of the passion in what are clearly martyrological colours, and also as the suffering of the *prophet* (Lk. 11:49-51; 13:33; 24:19). Jesus dies not with a loud cry but in an almost triumphant prayer of surrender to God's will (Lk. 23:46), the centurion praises God (23:47) and the multitude beat their breasts (23:48).

features of the straightforward motif of the suffering of the righteous are discernible in this early narrative: the 'to suffer many things' (Mk. 8:31) as well as *paschein* (that is, suffering to the point of death, in the later texts).[51] Jesus is seen as righteous, thus as one who must suffer for that very reason (Mt. 27:19; Lk. 23:47; also Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14). According to some exegetes the two epithets 'holy one' and 'righteous one' (Acts 3:14) in their pre-Lukan tradition are probably not titles but the expression of an ethico-religious appraisal of Jesus' life.[52] Still, in Luke 'the holy one' is a messianic title (Lk. 1:35), while Luke manifestly applies the phrase 'the Just One' (Acts 22:14) solely to the suffering Jesus. Thus Luke is using the old Jewish notion of the suffering righteous one, but in a messianic context (as also in Enoch 38:2 and 53:6, where the righteous one is given a messianic interpretation). One layer of early Christian tradition evidently modelled its interpretation of Jesus' death on the theme of the suffering of a righteous man. The allusions to psalms that speak of the suffering of the pious are plain;[53] where Jesus' suffering is predicted
[290] there are no references to those psalms but to other Old Testament loci.[54] In the passion narrative the vague allusions to the 'psalms of suffering' interpret Jesus' suffering spontaneously and naturally as being 'according to the Scriptures', hence as part of God's plan in salvation history. The entire Golgotha event is interpreted − or rather perceived – in terms of Ps. 22. Psalms 31and 69 have also been invoked to assess Jesus' suffering at its true value. Luke 23:46 replaces the offending quotation from Ps. 22:2 with Ps. 31:6; and Mt. 27:34, in response to Mk. 15:23,36 ('vinegar'), focuses attention on Ps. 69:22. Thus the spirit of these psalms[55] is partly reproduced in the early passion narrative: God has indeed vindicated, 'justified',[56] the suffering righteous one. Moreover, these psalms of suffering are placed in the framework of a song of thanksgiving for deliverance, so that the entire passion narrative is clearly in the perspective of Jesus' eventual deliverance and glorification after his death.[57] The Markan gospel plainly understands Jesus' life story in terms of the motif of the suffering but delivered righteous man in these psalms. Not until this stratum of the early passion narrative had been partly overlaid by later explanations of Jesus' suffering did the Johannine gospel (with its penchant for

[51] Lk. 22:15; 24:26,46; Acts 1:3; 3:18; 17:3; Hebr. 2:18; 9:26; 13:12;1 Pet. 2:21-23; 4:1.
[52] U. Wilckens, *Missionsreden,* 170; L. Ruppert, *Jesus,* 47-48.
[53] See note 25. J. Gnilka, 'Die Verhandlungen vor dem Synhedrion und vor Pilatus nach Mk. 14:53-15:5', in *Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum NT.,* H. 2 (Neukirchen-Zürich 1970), (5-21) 11-12, sees even the scenes of Jesus' trial itself as full of allusions to the psalms of the 'suffering righteous one': Ps. 37:14,16; Ps. 38:9-10 (Jesus keeps silent); Ps. 108:2-3 (accusations made by enemies); investigation of what motivates the trial and execution: Ps. 36:22; 53:5; see also 37:13; 62:10; 69:2-3; 85:14; false witnesses: Ps. 26:12; 34:11 (each time from the Septuagint).
[54] Mk. 14:27 par. Zech. 13:7; Mt. 27:10; Zech. 11:12-13; Lk. 22:37: Isa. 53:12.
[55] Ps. 22:23ff.; Ps. 31:20-25; Ps. 69:31-35; Ps. 41.
[56] E. Flesseman-van Leer, in H. Conzelmann et al., *Zur Bedeutung des Todes Jesu,* 93.
[57] L. Ruppert, *Jesus,* 51.

citing reflective passages) explicate the 'according to the Scriptures' by way of the introductory formula, 'that the Scripture may be fulfilled' (Jn. 13:18; 19:24, 28).

In addition the pre-Markan material itself contains allusions to the third *Ebed* song (Isa. 50:4-9);[58] and lastly, Wis. 2 (itself a reinterpretation of the suffering servant of God in Isa. 53) also influenced the account of Jesus' trial in Mk. 14:55-65.[59] Mark's concern is not to show that Jesus suffered as a righteous one but as son of man (see Mk. 8:31; 9:31; 10:33) and son of God (15:39); but the starting point of this development is the dependence of the trial episode (Mk. 14:5 5-64) on the diptych in the book of Wisdom.[60]

One could say that the early form of the passion narrative was conceived in terms of the theme of the suffering righteous one,[61] but that even in the Markan redaction, and still more obviously in Matthew and Luke, this motif has moved into the background.[62] The Christians of the earliest local churches were apparently able to assimilate the scandal of Jesus' execution that continued to rankle only by prayerful meditation on holy Scripture − the Old Testament. Hence the many, sometimes implicit allusions to Scripture throughout the (liturgical) passion narrative, considered by many scholars to be one of the [291] oldest, if not the oldest Christian document. Only the Scriptures could

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[58] Isa. 50:6; Mk. 14:65 and 15:19.

[59] *'Pais Theou'* (Wis. 2:18; Isa. 52:13 LXX) is interpreted as *'huios Theou'* in Wis. 2:13. Mk. 14:61-62 speaks of the 'Son of the Most High'. In fact Jesus is here represented as the suffering servant of God in Deutero-Isaiah. See the discussion: J. Jeremias, *pais theou,* in ThWNT V, 709-713; O. Cullmann, *Christologie,* 59-68; H.W. Wolff, *Jesaja 53 im Urchristentum* (Berlin 1950²), 55-71; B. van Iersel, *Der Sohn,* 60ff; U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte,* l.c., 163-8. Even before Luke, the son of Ps. 2:7 has been merged with the *'pais'* of Isa. 42:1 (cf. Mk. 1:11 parr., and Mk. 9:7 par.). In Acts 4 Luke employs both titles interchangeably. *'Dia…tou agiou paidos sou Iesou'* is particularly evident in liturgy (Acts 4:30; Didache 9:2-3; 10:2-3; 1 Clem. 59:2-4). In the New Testament, with the exception of Mt. 12:18, the '*pais*'-Christology is characteristic of Luke. That Jesus was himself conscious of being the Deutero-Isaianic suffering *Ebed* is dismissed by critical exegetes; W. Popkes, *Christus traditus* (Zürich 1967), 172-173; F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 64-66. Mk. 14:62: 'you will *see (opsesthe)* the son of man sitting...'; also in Wis. 5:2a *seeing* the exalted righteous one, after his death, will in itself be a condemnation of his murderers. The fact of seeing the exalted one is a silent testimony against them, intimating to them indirectly that they have already been condemned (Wis. 5:3-7). See Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* 49-92 (cf. Part Three).

[60] Ruppert, *Jesus,* 53ff. I leave aside Ruppert's disputed hypothesis as to whether this Wisdom diptych originally existed in Hebrew. In any event, if the influence of Isa. 53 on the Markan material *via* the re-interpretation of Wis. 2:12-20 and 5:1-7 has been proven (and it very likely has), the latter would seem to have been shaped partly by Greek-speaking Jewish Christians; for in these allusions (as in allusions to the Psalms) the Book of Wisdom is already assumed to be 'Scripture'.

[61] It is a striking fact that *'ho dikaios'* (the righteous one, with the nuance: 'vindicated by God') occurs seven times, six of them in connection with suffering: Lk. 23:47; Acts 3:14; 7:52; Mt. 27:19; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:1.

[62] This is constistent with G. Schille's hypothesis, which finds more and more support for his contention that the primitive local churches held (annual) services to commemorate Jesus' suffering and death, and prayerfully meditated on this event in the light of Scripture (see above), in ZThK 52 (1955), 161-205. The precise chronological sequence of the passion story (Mark) would therefore presumably have been settled on liturgical, not historiographical, grounds.

elucidate the divine 'must' of this suffering (Lk. 24:26; 24:44-46) for them. The persistence, both implicit and allusive, of these scriptural quotations in the earliest account of the passion shows that it was not originally apologetically motivated but the product of prayerful reflection in order to resolve their own perplexity about this event. This interpretation of Jesus' suffering and death, grounded in prayerful meditation on Scripture − that is, Jesus' suffering is the scripturally based suffering of the righteous one − might well be called the foundation of the salvation history interpretive scheme or the divine 'dei': ignominious suffering 'must' precede the paschal glorification. The fact that there is almost no allusion to Isa. 53 in the earliest stage of the passion narrative[63] suggests that the meditation on suffering did not initially recognize the salvific implication of Jesus' suffering and death.

C. A REDEMPTIVE, ATONING DEATH: SOTERIOLOGICAL SCHEME

The term 'soteriological scheme' refers to certain tradition complexes in which Jesus' death is seen as an atonement for human beings, a vicarious propitiatory sacrifice to redeem mankind. The theme is recognizable in the *hyper* formulae: *died for us*, *on account of* our sins.

However, the pre-synoptic as well as the pre-Pauline material in which these *hyper* formulae occur is (at any rate at first sight) noticeably sparse. Established (i.e. indicative of a fixed tradition) soteriological, christological formulae are only identifiable in Gal. 1:4; Rom. 4:25; 5:8; 8:32; Eph. 5:2; then in the early kerygma of 1 Cor. 15:3b-5; in the words spoken over the cup in the Markan tradition of the last supper (Mk. 14:24); and, as the sole authentically synoptic evidence, the saying about the 'ransom for many' in Mk. 10:45; finally, 1 Pet. 2:21-24, the only early hymn to Christ in which the theme of salvation or redemption is recognizable. Not until a later stage in its development does this soteriological interpretation of Jesus' death become the decisive factor in Paul's Christology, the Letter to the Hebrews and the deutero-Pauline letters, as well as the Apocalypse and the Johannine gospel. In that sense the theme of redemption is amply represented in the New Testament; but for that very reason its scanty basis in the oldest layers is all the more striking.[64] An even
[292] greater problem is that later scriptural 'proofs' that cite Isa. 53 fail to mention the idea of vicarious atonement.[65]

The result of this exegetical situation is that the soteriological interpretation

[63] Roloff, 'Soteriologische Deutung des Todes Jesu', l.c., 42-43; also Ruppert, *Jesus,* 59-60; E. Schweizer, *Erniedrigung,* 72-73.
[64] J. Roloff, 'Soteriologische Deutung', 43.
[65] Mk. 14:61a; Mt. 8:17; Acts 8:32-33. There is one exception: the *'hyper hèmōn'* of 1 Pet. 2:21-24; but the context here is a hymn, composed with Deutero-Isaianic motifs, not a scriptural proof.

of Jesus' death is declared – maybe too hastily − to be a secondary development based on an earlier interpretation, allegedly located either in the contrast scheme or in the causal interpretation of the salvation history scheme. The secondary development is explicated either in terms of Isa. 53 or of the then widespread Jewish notion of vicarious propitiation effected by martyrdom.

Many exegetes in fact see the soteriological interpretation of Jesus' death as the outcome of the scriptural proof in Isa. 53 (the 'servant of God'). But in its earliest forms it is difficult to demonstrate any dependence of this motif on Isa. 53; what is more, the schools of tradition that explicitly look for scriptural proofs (second interpretive scheme) tend to avoid obvious references to Isa. 53 (see above). At present, therefore, there is fair exegetical consensus that in Jesus' time the Jews generally did not apply Isa. 53 to a 'suffering messiah'. On the other hand one cannot deny that the substance of some elements of the soteriological formula material, such as 'ransom for many' (Mk. 10:45b), 'he died for our sins' (1 Cor. 15:3b), and 'he was put to death for our trespasses' (Rom. 4:25), clearly echoes Isa. 53:5. According to J. Roloff, Isa. 53 was used fairly loosely in an early phase of Palestinian Christianity in a manner that was not yet part of the mainstream of evolving scriptural proof (as applied to Jesus' death) and unacquainted with the theological, systematic use of the corpus of *Ebed* songs.[66] In the soteriological formulae the allusions to Isa. 53 are evidently *not* 'proof texts': the idea of the 'divine must' is absent. But the 'theme' (Isa. 53) had become common property in Judaism by then.

1 Cor. 15:3b says: 'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures'; this in no way attests the contrary;[67] and in the second clause the resurrection 'in accordance with Scripture' is unconnected with the broader interpretive element ('the third day'). The remarkable feature of this credal formula is that it combines two originally independent strands of tradition: the salvation history interpretive scheme is evident in the phrase 'in accordance with the Scriptures', whereas the deutero-Isaiahan soteriological interpretation is observable in 'for our sins'. The elements of tradition in 1 Cor. 15:3b-5, [293] however early, are not the origin of the other interpretations of Jesus' death but are themselves the product of a long process of reflection and merging of traditions. In itself, at any rate, this says nothing against the antiquity of the independent traditions, including those offering a soteriological interpretation.[68] It does, however, pose the problem of whether Isa. 53 was the reason for interpreting Jesus' death soteriologically. To my mind another pertinent question is whether the Jews at that time read into those *Ebed* songs

[66] L.c., 44.
[67] Thus Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 197-211, and Roloff, l.c., 45.
[68] Thus Roloff, ibid, 45-46.

what people read into them later.[69]

Because of the problem of demonstrating a link between Isa. 53 and the soteriological interpretation of Jesus' death, other exegetes looked for a connection with the late Jewish idea of martyrdom as vicarious propitiation.[70] In 2 Macc. 7:37-38 the motif of substitution does feature, but we only read about vicarious martyrdom in later Jewish writings after A.D. 70 − more especially in 4 Macc. 6:28-29; 1:11; 17:21; 18:5. In later rabbinic writings, the midrashes and targums, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac played a major role; and one could hardly argue that, however late such documents are in relation to early Christianity, these ideas came suddenly out of the blue.[71] Even so, in terms of tradition history the late Jewish theology of martyrdom or the rabbinic martyrological legends have nothing to do with the soteriological view of Jesus' death, because this martyr motif as such represents a quite different tradition from that articulated in the theme of the suffering righteous one.[72]

Thus the soteriological formulae form a very early, self-contained tradition complex, whose origin cannot be accounted for either by secondary deduction from other interpretations of Jesus' death or with reference to Jewish theologies of vicarious martyrdom.[73] All such interpretations founder on difficulties presented by tradition history, as well as the absence from the oldest stratum of the *hyper* formulae, of any reference to Isa. 53, in spite of substantive affinities.

This rather negative result of the search for a Jewish antecedent of the soteriological interpretation of Jesus' death raises the question whether the motif is not rooted in some recollection of Jesus' last days, in which he had to come to terms with his approaching violent death. In other words, we must seriously consider whether Mark's reference to the 'ransom for many' (Mk. 14:24) − with its manifest context in the church's eucharistic worship − is not
[294] historically rooted in a saying or gesture of Jesus himself interpreting his coming death. Thus our examination of the early Christian interpretations of Jesus' death again takes us back to his earthly life, to the 'historical Jesus'. All we have established so far is that in early Christianity three tradition complexes existed side by side, each offering its own interpretation of Jesus' death. They all appear to be *very* old, although their chronological order cannot

[69] G. Fohrer, 'Das Alte Testament und das Thema "Christologie" ', in EvTh 30 (1970) (281-298), 286-291, has shown that in these *Ebed* songs there is no question of suffering vicariously on behalf of others but of paying the penalty of one's own *unknown* sins.
[70] Thus H. Kessler, *Die theologische Bedeutung des Todes Jesu* (Düsseldorf 1971²), 232-235.
[71] See below in Part Three: 'The third day he rose.'
[72] Ruppert, *Jesus,* 40-41. A martyr as such did not need to be 'a righteous one' (see 2 Macc. 7:32), and just by dying as a martyr he could make reparation for his own sins and those of others; see E. Lohse, *Martyrer und Gottesknecht* (Göttingen 1963²), 29-32; Ruppert, *Jesus,* 74, n. 6.
[73] Roloff, l.c., 50.

be firmly established.[74]

§2 The death of Jesus, viewed in the context of his earthly life

A. REJECTION OF JESUS' MESSAGE AND PRAXIS

Present-day debates on continuity and discontinuity between the earthly Jesus and the Christ proclaimed by the church is marked by what seems to me a fundamental misunderstanding, namely that Jesus' death marks a total break with the church's subsequent preaching of the resurrection. One school puts the emphasis entirely on the caesura established by this event, others feel it should be toned down. What is overlooked is that while there certainly is a breaking point, it is located in the ministry of the historical Jesus, in the resistance to him and the rejection of his message. And the question arising out of this is whether that rejection, as a fact of Jesus' entire earthly life, did not give him an opportunity to interpret his approaching death in some way prior to the event.

Exegetes have frequently considered whether Jesus' preaching in Galilee ended in failure, at least in the sense that people did not accept his message.[75]

'*But* blessed is he who takes no offence at me' (Lk. 7:18-23=Mt. 11:6).[76] Obviously, this passage is not looking back on Jesus' whole ministry (after his life had ended) but refers to a historical recollection of specific facts of Jesus' life and the reactions they evoked: the question whether Jesus brought salvation or harboured 'a demon'.[77] We saw above that Jesus rejected both the Aramaic-Pharisaic exposition of the Law and the overbearing cultic devoutness of the Sadducees. His preaching and praxis struck at the very heart of the Judaic principle of 'performance' in the religious sphere. In particular his [295] solidarity with the 'unclean' and with tax collectors and sinners was a thorn in the flesh of pious officialdom − it was contrary to 'the Law'.

If one wants to devise a theology of Jesus of Nazareth focusing primarily on his life, message and ministry, then the rift which contact with Jesus created in the Jewish community of his day must be assigned a fundamental place. After all, even pre-Easter faith and trust in Jesus had to face up to this challenge. Essentially the question whether Jesus was a bringer of good or ill was a problem even before Easter. His suffering and death were consequences of the

[74] H. Schürmann, in *Orientierung an Jesus,* 357.
[75] See e.g., C.H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (London 1971), 119-136; Fr. Muszner, 'Gab es eine "Galiläische Krise"?', in *Orientierung an Jesus,* l.c., 238-252. Cf. S. Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 364, n. 275, apropos what is in essence the Q text of Mt. 11:21-24=Lk. 10:13-15.
[76] *Kai* (=and) here signifies a contrast: l.c., 'but'.
[77] Lk. 11:14-23; Mt. 12:22-23; cf. the Markan tradition: Mk. 3:2; Jn. 7:11; 8:48 and 10:20. See A. Polag, *Zu den Stufen der Christologie in Q* (Studia Evangelica, IV-1) (Berlin 1968), 72-74. (I have not been able to obtain his detailed typescript on this subject.)

conflict aroused during his life. The problem did not arise only with Jesus' death. After all, he did not die in bed but was executed.

The Markan gospel clearly says that Jesus' preaching in Galilee met with initial success.[78] But from Mk. 7 onwards allusions to 'a great crowd of people' diminish, as do the positive reactions.[79] The reign of God was the good news that Jesus had brought to Galilee; he proclaimed salvation. Yet the earliest Aramaic layer of the Q tradition shows awareness that the 'Jesus phenomenon' might be rejected: the possibility of being offended by him (Lk. 7:18-23) apparently goes back to pre-Easter memories. Thus the possibility of Jesus being rejected is part of the earliest 'christological package'; it evidently goes back to recollections of failure in Jesus' days on earth. The veiled, ambiguous character of Jesus' historical manifestation − sharing the ambiguity of everything one could call historical − is amplified by Mark; but the Markan redaction only makes plain what had already been consciously articulated in the pre-Markan tradition: Jesus' life is historically opaque. 'The divine' in him, his coming 'from God', is not an apodictic, cogently unequivocal fact; it calls for a vote of confidence. Mark deals with the rejection of Jesus' message and ministry at the beginning of his gospel (Mk. 2:1 up to 3:5); and he concludes these first stories with his pregnant interpretation: 'The Pharisees ... immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him' (Mk. 3:6). Mark obviously wants to show how it could come about that the revered master was put to death. Elsewhere in Mark it is not the Pharisees and Herodians but in particular 'the high priests and scribes' who contemplate destroying Jesus (Mk. 11:18). But it would seem from the Q tradition that the rejection of Jesus' message extended beyond these schematic categories. From
[296] the woe pronouncements on the towns of Chorazin, Capernaum and Bethsaida (Lk. 10:13-15=Mt. 11:20-24) it appears that Jesus' message was rejected by whole cities. The asides also, to the effect that a prophet is not honoured in his own country (Mk. 6:4; Mt. 15:57; Lk. 4:24; Jn. 4:44), as well as the typically Johannine 'Will you also go away?' (Jn. 6:67), point in much the same direction – that of concrete historical experiences of failure. Jesus certainly appears to have enjoyed popularity as long as no danger threatened; but ultimately his preaching of the great 'about-face' as a manifestation of the coming reign of God had only limited success.

There are grounds for seeing this failure of Jesus' preaching and offer of salvation as the reason why he decided to 'go up to Jerusalem'. Despite heated, ongoing exegetical debate there is growing consensus on a solid historical core in the New Testament record, according to which Jesus, during his lifetime,

[78] Mk. 1:33-34,38; 2:1b,12b; 2:13; 3:7-11,20; 4:1; 5:21,24; 6:6b, 12b; 6:33-34,44,55-56.
[79] Again in Mk. 7:37; 8:1, 4; 9:14,15; 10:1b; 10:46 and 11:8-10-18b.

sent his disciples out 'to every town and place' (Lk. 10:1) to proclaim *his* message of God's coming reign (Lk. 10:1, 11; Mt. 10:50-7; besides Mk. 6:7-13).[80] The presence of this material in both the Q community and the Markan tradition argues for its authenticity. In commissioning the disciples Jesus was evidently facing up to the imminence of God's reign on the one hand, and to possible definitive rejection of his message on the other (see Lk. 10:10-12). At the least we must acknowledge that this proclamation of judgment on refusal to accept Jesus' message can hardly be laid purely at the door of the Q community and has no basis in the final phase of Jesus' own preaching, after experiences of rejection. The fact that Jesus restricted his message exclusively to Israel (also see Mt. 15:24) is no longer widely disputed. Apropos Jesus' relatively large-scale dispatch of disciples to the whole of Israel exegetes are probably right in speaking of his final offer to Israel.[81] Jesus gave exactly the same commission to all the disciples, to do what he himself was doing; preaching the coming kingdom of God, healing the sick and driving out devils (Lk. 10:1; Mt. 10:50-6; Lk. 10:8-11; Mk. 6:7-13).

After the return of the disciples who had been sent out − apparently full of enthusiasm about their activities − Jesus probably concentrated on training a more intimate group of disciples: the eventual 'twelve' (or: the twelve already singled out by himself?).[82] This change in apostolic strategy was apparently the outcome of growing awareness of the failure of his preaching in Galilee.

The gospels seem to suggest that Jesus was none too sure about the success [297]
of their missionary journeys which the disciples who had been sent out – in pairs − reported to their master. On their return one discerns in the gospels an initially gentle but increasingly plain insistence on Jesus' part that his disciples should take a 'rest' (Mk. 6:30-31), away from the populace (Mt. 14:22; Mk.6:45). So they all go with Jesus across the lake, but even there, unfortunately, run into a large crowd: 'a flock without shepherds', the gospels muse (Mk. 6:30-44; 8:1-10; Mt. 14:13-21; 15:32-39; and Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1-15). Remarkably, all four gospels feature this story and two of them even have dual accounts of what apparently followed: Jesus fed the crowd miraculously. Especially significant is the evangelical comment (Mk. 6:52; 8:17-18, 21): 'They did not understand it.' On the one hand Jesus offered (a meal of) fellowship to sinners; on the other they wanted to proclaim him king. Jesus' reaction, according to the gospel narrative, is unambiguous: he constrains (as the text has it) his disciples to rest, away from the multitude. These New Testament passages convey a tendency to isolation, in other words Jesus' determination to keep his intimate disciples

[80] See especially H. Schürmann, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den synoptischen Evangelien* (Düsseldorf 1968), 137-149; J. Roloff, *Apostolat, Verkündigung, Kirche* (Gütersloh 1965), 151; M. Hengel, *Die Ursprünge der christlichen Mission,* in NTS 18 (1971-2), 15-38.
[81] Muszner, in *Orientierung an Jesus,* 243 and 249-250.
[82] Dodd, *The founder,* 130ff; Muszner, in *Orientierung an Jesus,* 247ff.

well away from the enthusiasm of the populace. At any rate the Markan tradition is significant: Jesus is obliged, apparently against the wishes of his disciples, to 'constrain' them (for the time being) to quit the stage, to take the boat back to the other side − although it was nightfall and a storm was threatening: Jesus himself withdraws 'to a solitary mountain'.[83]

After this incident the focus of Jesus' activity switches from Galilee to Jerusalem − although the context is difficult to reconstruct historically. What does become clear is that, according to the gospels, from then on Jesus considered his message to have failed in Galilee and so decided to head for Jerusalem. From that moment on the gospels begin to make clear allusions to Jesus' passion, in other words, to his final rejection. His path is described, typically, as an exodus, a journey to Jerusalem.[84] Whereas in the first phase of his public ministry Jesus travelled around the country proclaiming the approach of God's reign, the gospels now record a journey towards suffering, towards death. This is no doubt partly determined by the historical outcome of events, but perhaps also by historical reminiscences of the admitted fiasco in Galilee.

Although predictions of the passion in the gospels are certainly not historical
[298] reproductions of Jesus' own words, one can still ask whether they are simply *vaticinia ex eventu,* that is, simply retrojected after the events of the crucifixion and Easter. We need to examine whether after the fiasco in Galilee the decision to go up to Jerusalem did not turn the prospect of a violent death into a potentially concrete experience. In any case Matthew's *apo tote* − 'from that moment on' (Mt. 16:21) – identifies a particular moment in time, which clearly marks a caesura with what went before. Of course, it is hard to judge the chronological exactness historically; the gospels may give a schematic version of a historically gradual process, which in the end made Jesus realize that overall his mission in Galilee had failed and that, convinced of its truth and urgency as he was, he should look for a different outcome, with a possible prospect of total failure.

All this, though showing clear signs of post-Easter reflection, nonetheless has roots in an earlier period: even before Good Friday Jesus was 'the rejected one' and felt himself to be so on the basis of the historically brief period of his public ministry. I believe F. Muszner is right when, apropos Jesus' decision to leave Galilee for Jerusalem, he says: 'At first Jesus goes about as the one who offers the eschatological reign of God; then, when the offer is rejected by Israel, he does so as the one who, with the rejection of the offer, is himself rejected.'[85]

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[83] Dodd, *The founder,* 134, inspired at this point, of course, in particular by the Johannine gospel.
[84] H. Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit* (Tübingen 1960[3]), 67; G. Friedrich, 'Lk. 9:51 und die Entrückungschristologie', in *Orientierung an Jesus,* esp. 70-74.
[85] l.c., 249-250.

Thoroughgoing historical criticism leads us to concede, at the very least, that Jesus of Nazareth, despite his awareness of the manifest lethal threat posed by the authorities in Jerusalem, deliberately and consciously made his way to the city of Zion. His purpose in so doing needs to be examined more closely.

B. JESUS IN THE FACE OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH

On the basis of an exclusively kerygma theology, which traces the source of the four gospels to the life of the church without regard to ancient history and recollections of Jesus' own life, it is difficult to make a confident, meaningful appraisal of Jesus' self-understanding in the face of his approaching death. However, we have repeatedly referred to unjustified implicit assumptions made when applying *Formgeschichte* to New Testament interpretation. The gospels contain enough linguistic signals pointing to awareness of the historical distance between the earthly life of Jesus and that of the Christian [299] churches, so that, along with the proclamation of the church's paschal kerygma, historical recollection of Jesus' days on earth helps to give substance to the four gospels that lie before us.

(a) Growing certainty of a violent death

One would have to declare Jesus completely naïve if one maintained that he went up from Galilee to Jerusalem in all innocence, without any inkling of the deadly opposition he was to encounter there. Every Jew in those days knew that the Romans had the power of crucifixion; Herod Antipas had the *ius gladii* − the right to behead someone − and the beheading of John the Baptist must have been vividly present to Jesus' mind;[86] lastly, the Sanhedrin was empowered to authorize stoning (cf. Stephen's martyrdom). This knowledge is only relevant when one considers whether Jesus was conscious of doing things, committing actions or proclaiming a message which sooner or later would lead to an inevitable collision with one or more of those authorities. If we are dealing with a rational person and not with an unrealistic, fanatical apocalypticist (even they were anything but fanatical in late Judaism), the consciousness of doing or saying something which could and would cause radical conflict with one of those authorities implies consciously assuming responsibility for the legal consequences of such behaviour. So let us link up Jesus' activity with the three authorities that had the power to impose the death penalty on him.

Jesus was known to have been baptized by John the Baptist; and from the

[86] Some historians maintain that this *'ius gladii'* of the Jewish authorities was not recognized by the Roman occupying power: thus J. Blinzler, Der Prozez Jesu Das jüdische und das römische Gerichtsverfahren gegen Jesus Christus (Regensburg 19603), 163-174; see below note 107.

time of his public ministry it was rumoured that he was actually *Johannes redivivus* (Mk. 6:14); furthermore that he was proclaiming, even more radically than the Baptist, a message of total conversion in virtue of God's approaching reign, in a way that demanded siding with or against his person. It would be naive to suppose that Jesus, having witnessed king Herod Antipas' use of the *ius gladii* in the case of John the Baptist, failed to relate John's ministry to his own. With the Baptist for an example he knew that Herod's sword was hanging over his head as well. In Mk. 3:6 the 'Herodians', whom Mark never mentions anywhere else, point to a historical reminiscence. In short: a sane, sensible person like Jesus of Nazareth must definitely have allowed for the
[300] possibility of execution by beheading, like John the Baptist.

Was the Sanhedrin with its power to inflict death by stoning a threat to Jesus? Apart from Mt. 16:1, 6, 11, 12 and the gospel of John, the Sadducees (strongest party in the Sanhedrin) are not mentioned as opponents of Jesus until the account of the passion. It is a known fact, on the other hand, that the Pharisees, who also had a say in the Sanhedrin, only acquired the leading position ascribed to them in the gospels after the Jewish war (A.D. 70). Hence the New Testament's portrayal of antagonism between Jesus and the Pharisees is to some extent coloured by the later situation of the church. One may assume that the tension between Jesus and the Sadducees dated from an earlier period than the story of the passion would suggest. On the other hand, except for Mt. 27:62 the Pharisees are not mentioned in the account of the passion. Hence one may surmise that the opposition to Jesus came not so much from just one particular group but from the two principal ones at the time: the Pharisees and, especially towards the end, the Sadducees.[87] It is hard to believe that Jesus was so naïve as not to have realized that his words and actions were creating an explosive and, for him, perilous situation, bearing in mind the leaders of the Jewish community at that time.

Finally, did Jesus have anything to fear directly from the Romans? The fact is that he was executed by the Romans, as the nature of his death − by crucifixion − demonstrates, and therefore on grounds of possible or alleged Zealotic reactions among the people. Jesus had least need to consider that possibility, since the tenor of his proclamation revealed no interest in the problems of the Roman occupation. Among the possible factors here was one particular – more especially political − interpretation of messianism, which admirers certainly attributed to him. There were undeniably some ex-Zealots among Jesus' disciples ('Simon, the Zealot', Lk. 6:15 and parallels; Acts 1:13); according to some authorities, who associate 'Iscariot' with *sicarius* (dagger man), Judas supposedly belonged to these circles; even 'Boanerges', sons of thunder, are

[87] H. Schürmann, in *Orientierung an Jesus*, 335-336.

said to attest a Zealotic connection.[88] For someone who proclaimed God's kingly rule over Israel to appear in Jerusalem with such a following, on top of an incident (probably earlier) like the cleansing of the temple (Mk. 11:15-16 and parallels) and the apparently authentic saying of Jesus about 'demolishing the temple' (Mk. 14:58 parallel in Mt; see Jn. 2:19; Mk. 15:29 parallel in Mt. 12:6; Acts 6:14 and Mk. 13:2), may have appeared directly, and more especially indirectly, provocative following the complaint lodged by the Jewish leaders with the Roman authorities. In any case it would have made the occupying [301] power, always on the alert for rebellion, critical of anyone stirring up popular feeling.

Historically Jesus' death was clearly an extension of the reaction to his public ministry, especially in view of the example of John the Baptist, who was also done away with 'for fear of the Romans'. The final outcome − Jesus' execution − is historically explicable as an interplay of various factors, each of which was dangerous enough in itself.[89] If Jesus was not a fanatic – which from what we know about him historically he certainly was not − then from a particular moment in his career he must have rationally faced up to the possibility, in the longer term the probability and ultimately the certainty of a fatal outcome. Currently exegetes and historians are more or less unanimous on this score. The exceptions are theologians who are still under the impression of Bultmann's statement that we cannot know what Jesus thought about his death and that he might well have been steeped in total despair at this surprising turn of events, which had thwarted all his plans. For these theologians what Bultmann ventured cautiously as sheer speculation has become an essential element of their theological thinking (and was thus popularized in some quarters). It suggests present-day ideology and projection rather than historical accuracy.

(b) The unavoidable question of Jesus' own interpretation

Given Jesus' basic attitude towards the will of God his Father, an obvious question concerns his attitude to what he himself perceived to be the threatening possibility, likelihood, and eventually certainty of being rejected and executed, whether by the sword − because of Herod's royal prerogative (as with John the Baptist before him) − or by stoning − by virtue of the powers assigned to the Sanhedrin (as in Stephen's case later on) − or by crucifixion – the Roman penalty for serious criminal acts or rebellion, meted out to many at that time. One can rule out the possibility that someone like Jesus, who was proclaiming the imminent arrival of God's reign, would have failed to ponder

[88] O. Cullmann, *Jesus und die Revolutionären seiner Zeit* (Tübingen 1970).
[89] Schürmann, l.c., 357.

so probable and to him so dearly recognizable an outcome of his future life. It would mean that Jesus' end flagrantly contradicted what he himself had said about radical trust in God, whatever the empirical and historical circumstances might be. And *that* was the core of both Jesus' message and the behaviour
[302] which flowed from it; when all this had been fulfilled, he still referred to his being an 'unworthy servant' (Lk. 17:7-10). To entirely lack, or simply refrain from adopting, a moral or religious stance in the face of approaching death would not only be myopic but would suggest an incomprehensible, split personality.

Thus the fact of his approaching death was something Jesus had to integrate with his total surrender to God, as well as reconcile with his conviction of the urgency of his message. 'Not my will but your will be done' (Mk. 14:36c and parallels). Even if this is not a *verbum ipsissimum,* not a historical Jesus saying, it unmistakably reflects the inner consistency of Jesus' own preaching and his attitude towards life. But acceptance of God's will and evaluating concretely the point and purpose of what was to happen are not the same thing.

We have plenty of authentic sayings from Jesus' life that unmistakably point to an attitude of faithfulness unto death. Jesus was citing Israel's sapiential experiential wisdom tradition when he said that whoever loses his life will save it (Mk. 8:35 and parallels; see Lk. 17:33 and parallels; 14:26). We gather from Jesus' sayings and actions that as soon as death became a prospect he not only contemplated the possibility but experienced it existentially: circumstances forced him to give it a place in his radical trust in God. What place?

At a human level Jesus could hardly have seen the rejection of his message and the prospect of his personal rejection as meaningful in themselves. (The calamitous and incomprehensible event of Jesus' death profoundly affected the reactions in the New Testament, especially in the 'contrast scheme'.) Jesus himself faced the concrete task of reconciling the historical contingency of his violent death with the assurance of his message about God's approaching kingdom. Did Jesus simply acquiesce in the certainty of his death in uncomprehending, albeit radical trust in God, or did he come to see in this historical situation some sort of divine plan of salvation, in that not only in spite of but perhaps *through* the historical failure of his message, through his death, that message would be vindicated in divine, sovereign freedom? This 'in spite of' or 'through' is the key to the theological problem.

All the gospels or testimonies of the first Christians firmly assert that Jesus went to the cross of his own free will. This is partly post-Easter, ex post facto
[303] theological reflection, but could also indicate certain historical recollections. Substantiating them factually is not easy, but there are suggestive clues.

(c) Logion of unconditional readiness to serve

We have said that the soteriological interpretation of Jesus' death appears to have only a slender basis in the oldest strata of tradition prior to the gospels. Even so, tradition-historical analysis of a number of *diakonia* texts which feature a logion about Jesus' service and readiness to serve has established that these passages appear to be intrinsically connected with something that happened at the last supper shortly before Jesus' death. Cases in point are Mk. 10:45 and Lk. 22:27 and, secondarily, Lk. 12:37b and Jn. 13:1-20 − all texts forming part of the last supper tradition.

(1) Mk. 10:45 makes a clear connection between the theme of Jesus' *diakonein* or service and that of an expiatory death: 'For the son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' Here his service is presented as an ethical paradigm for his disciples. According to J. Roloff[90] the reference to Jesus' expiatory death is not a Markan redaction but was already present in the Markan tradition; Mark simply positioned the whole passage (verse 45a and b) at this point in his gospel because of its paraenetic function (as moral exhortation). In view of Lk. 22:24-27 (which is proper to Luke, and not a Lukan version of the Markan redaction) it is clear that the two themes did not always go together. The combination was made in the last supper tradition, the source of both verses 45b and 45a; a secondary development of 45a from 45b, or vice versa, is not possible.[91] In secular Greek *diakonein* originally denoted waiting at table; but in Hellenistic Jewry the meaning was broadened to cover diverse forms of service. In the Hellenistic Judaeo-Christian and Pauline gentile-Christian churches *diakonia* became a specifically Christian concept.[92] The Markan source itself recognizes the common Greek usage (Mk. 1:13, 31; 15:41) (with maybe a few transitional meanings elsewhere as well). The only instance of a patently ecclesial connotation is Lk. 22:26-27, a Lukan variant of Mk. 10:43, 45. Thus the earliest layers of the synoptic tradition use the term '*diakonia*' in its secular sense, while a specifically Christian usage is clearly apparent in *only one* particular group of texts, closely interrelated in tradition historical development. Roloff concludes [304] from this that Mk. 10:45 (with its obvious setting in the last supper tradition) is the crucial locus in the whole complex, which started the evolutionary process from the common Greek usage of the word to the 'service' terminology associated specifically with the church. In other words, the theological factor which touched off this shift in meaning is to be sought in an understanding of

[90] J. Roloff, 'Soteriologische Deutung des Todes Jesu', 51.
[91] Roloff, l.c., 50-5. Cf. W. Popkes, *Christus traditus,* 169-74; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 57-59.
[92] Rom. 11:13; 12:7; 15:31; 2 Cor. 3:7ff; 4:1; 5:18; also Acts 1:17-25; 6:1-4; 11:29; 12:25; 19:22; 20:24; 21:19.

the Lord's supper as an act of service by Jesus, meaningfully summarizing what his mission was about.[93] The notion of *diakonia,* service(-ability), reflects a very early interpretation of Jesus' death, anchored in the last supper tradition.

This is also apparent in Lk. 22:27: 'For which is the greater, one who sits at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves.' In Luke 22:24-27 some of Luke's inherited material is overlaid with an ecclesial, ethical exhortation or paraenesis; Jesus' service is presented as a model for office bearers in the church, for 'the disciples', and for the conduct of local church leaders when celebrating the Lord's supper. Here the ecclesial use of 'serving' and 'service' is consummated and complete. J. Roloff, counter to H. Schürmann, regards Lk. 22:24-27 not as a Lukan recasting of the Markan tradition but as a separate, independent tradition peculiar to Luke. The fact that the earthly Jesus acts as the one who serves at the meal only becomes intelligible if one is familiar with current mealtime protocol and with the meticulously observed hierarchy in Jesus' day. The Aramaic expression: 'I am in your midst', in the present tense, as opposed to the broad retrospect on the whole (and thus concluded) life of Jesus in Mk. 10:45, points to a very concrete situation, namely that of a meal, in which Jesus offers to share fellowship with his disciples. During the actual meal Jesus is the servant. This interpretation becomes all the more stringent if verse 27 or 27c originally formed part of the earliest pre-Lukan account of the last supper, which did not then include verses 24-26, so that verse 27 followed directly on the words of institution in verses 15-20: Jesus' act of self-surrender, the shedding of his blood 'for (or in place of) you', is here interpreted as a service that benefits the rest of the company. The last supper is seen as *diakonia* rendered to the disciples. Because of its relation to the last supper, 'serving' becomes a technical term for church praxis.[94] In Mk. 10:45, 45b Mark explicates what in Luke was suggested by the original conjunction of verse 27 with verses 15-20: Jesus' self-giving 'for many', a brief formula seemingly referring to the words
[305] pronounced over the bread and wine in the eucharistic liturgy. In both instances the phrase 'service of Jesus' echoes the soteriological motif of his death.

(2) With these two passages as background, Lk. 12:37b and Jn. 13:1-20 (the foot washing), in which the service motif again features, can also be interpreted in a soteriological perspective as well as in association with the last supper.

'(Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake, when he comes.) Truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will

[93] The *èlthon*-formula ('I have come in order that...') does not point *per se* to a retrospective evaluation of Jesus' entire ministry, as opposed to the *èlthen*-formula (see note 138 in the previous SectionTS!).

[94] Roloff, l.c., 58-59.

come and serve them' (Lk. 12:37b). The whole is a secondary amplification of a parousia parable used by the church (Lk. 12:36, 37a). The Lord girds himself, it seems, to wash the disciples' feet. This happens before the meal and before the invitation to sit down at table. In this passage the heavenly meal 'at the end of time', associated with Jesus' parousia, is envisaged in terms of an act performed by the earthly Jesus; it demonstrates the identity of the earthly Jesus with the Jesus who is to come 'at the last day'. That act is Jesus' service − his conduct as servant at the feast. Serving, service rendered out of love, thus summarizes Jesus' life; it is transposed from a historical event to the coming Lord. Luke 12:37b presupposes the tradition of the foot washing. The Johannine foot washing (Jn. 13:1-20), too, as a service of love to the disciples, is set in the context of Jesus' farewell meal.

One can fairly conclude from these four typical passages on Jesus' readiness to serve that this theme is firmly rooted in the 'mealtime tradition', although the motif is already well established in its own right in the pre-Johannine tradition of the foot washing episode and was recorded as an ethical model (Jn. 13:15, a *hupodeigma* for the disciples); but even then − in view of verse 1 (the approaching passover and Jesus' awareness that his hour had come) − the context of the service motif is still the Christian interpretation of Jesus' death. That death was an act of loving service performed by Jesus for his own, through which they are made a new community, a 'new covenant'. That is how it was seen in a very early tradition complex, already recognizable in 1 Cor. 15:3b as a fixed formula: 'he died for our sins'. These passages support our comment above about the soteriological interpretive scheme: the tradition of the salvific, redemptive significance of Jesus' death is not a secondary development but was grounded, at a very early stage, in the meaning which [306]
the early Christian churches discerned in Jesus' last supper with his disciples. In a very old stratum of the last supper tradition Jesus' self-giving death is interpreted as an act of loving service. The last supper tradition, therefore, is the starting point of the Christian interpretation of Jesus' death as his self-giving that procures salvation.

Historically, too, it is highly probable that Jesus understood himself to be an end-time prophet. Thus in his own life his approaching death confronted him with Israel's rejection of God's final offer of salvation to his people. This was the real problem in Jesus' self-understanding. So the question is justifiable, even pressing: did the earthly Jesus himself envisage his death as a service of love and had he hinted at this meaning of his death during his lifetime? If not, how do we explain the emergence of the soteriological motif in the early Christian last supper tradition with its diverse origins?

(d) The last supper: unshaken assurance of salvation in the face of death

One can hardly suppose that Jesus willed his death and sought it as the only possible way of realizing the kingdom of God. There would have been an element of play acting in his commitment to his message of *metanoia* and the reign of God if he had thought and known from the outset that salvation depended wholly on his death. That death only entered the picture as a result of the rejection of his preaching and ministry, which constituted an offer of salvation. This is not nullified by his death. An opposite interpretation would disregard Jesus' real 'learning by experience' throughout the course of his concrete life's history − in other words, would disregard his 'being truly man' in historical reality. Besides, it would simply formalize the saving significance of Jesus' death.

What can be said on the strength of the evidence is that Jesus did nothing to escape a violent death. On the contrary, despite growing certainty that his message had largely been rejected, he deliberately set out for Jerusalem. But one can hardly say that in Jesus' self-understanding his message of salvation derived its meaning only from his death. The truth is: he died as he lived, and he lived as he died.

That Jesus had to work out for himself what his attitude to impending death
[307] must be follows from his overall attitude to life in this new situation. Hence the question is whether he kept this final event and its possible meaning to himself, remained silent about them, or whether in his last days, at least in the intimate circle of his disciples, he spoke of them (in one way or another). Only that could explain in what sense Jesus could have experienced his death as a service of love.

Exegetically it is evident that all allegedly clear, explicit predictions of the passion are secondary, that is, reworked (at least partly) in light of the paschal events. Yet there is more to it. It is hard to believe, knowing his concern for his friends, that even in his last days Jesus would have said nothing to them about his approaching violent death. Would he have failed to prepare his disciples in any way for the shock of his death when he saw himself faced with the grave problem of reconciling that death and his message and of coming to terms with it? Historically, therefore, we must seriously consider the likelihood that during the final meal with his friends Jesus would have said or done something to ensure that once he was dead his intimate disciples would not lapse into permanent despair and disillusionment. On the other hand any public, unambivalent discussion of it would contradict the basic tenor of the preaching of Jesus, who never made himself a second subject (in addition to God or God's reign) of his preaching: Jesus proclaimed not himself but the coming kingdom of God.

Within these extreme limits the gospel accounts of Jesus' blessing of the

bread and the cup during the last supper, although heavily overlaid by the by now established post-Easter eucharistic praxis of the church, display an unmistakable core of historical recollection.

In an earlier chapter we said that Jesus' mealtime fellowship with, in particular, sinners and marginalized people in Israel was an authentic and typical feature of his earthly ministry. In addition the accounts of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes[95] play such a role in the gospels that they make 'eating and drinking with Jesus' a central feature of his offer of (final) wellbeing and fellowship, especially when he himself acts as host − as at this last meal. So although it is a separate tradition, we must not see the last supper as wholly detached from the many instances during Jesus' earthly life when he made the offer of salvation by way of a shared meal of fellowship.[96] To put it differently: the last supper is itself set in a broader context of Jesus' life, in which salvation imparted by God is tendered in the context of a [308] fellowship meal. But in the overall picture such fellowship in the face of approaching death assumes a very pregnant significance.

That the last supper was actually a Jewish passover meal is disputable on many different grounds, so we shall not consider that aspect here. What is beyond dispute is that Jesus offered his disciples a farewell meal in the consciousness of his impending death. In regard to this problem the gospels reveal two layers: an earlier and a more recent one.

The later passages are liturgical formulae reminding the church of what Jesus did during this farewell meal. They contain a recognizable Pauline-Lukan tradition (Lk. 22:20a parallel 1 Cor. 11:25) and a Markan one (Mk. 14:24 parallel Mt. 26:26-28).[97] The Pauline-Lukan tradition can be summarized thus: 'This cup, now proffered, affords a share in the new covenant promised by the prophets, which comes about thanks to my martyrdom.'[98] Traditionally 'blood' in this context signified the blood of a martyr.[99] In the Markan tradition, on the other hand, the renewal of the covenant is brought about by Jesus' death, interpreted in light of Exod. 24:8 as a cultic sacrifice: 'This is my blood of the covenant.'

These passages have clearly been influenced by liturgical practice in the church and so have a post-Easter character. But in both Luke (22:18) and Mark

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[95] Mk.6:34-44 par. Mt. 14:21; Lk.9:11b-17; Mk. 8:1-9 par. Mt. 15:32-38; Jn. 6:1-15.

[96] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 237-269; see also 'Heil als Gemeinschaft', in *Gottesdienst und Oeffentlichkeit* (eds P. Cornehl-H. Bahr) (Hamburg 1970), 88-117; and 'Soteriologische Deutung des Todes Jesu', 62.

[97] See Schürmann, *Der Einsetzungsbericht Lk. 22:19-20* (Münster 1970²); 'Wie hat Jesus seinen Tod bestanden und verstanden?', in *Orientierung an Jesus,*l.c., 354-358; *Jesu Abendmahlshandlung als Zeichen für die Welt* (Leipzig 1970), and 'Das Weiterleben der Sache Jesu in nachösterlichen Herrenmahl', in BZ 16 (1972), 1-23; H. Kessler, *Die theologische Bedeutung des Todes Jesu,* 277.

[98] Schürmann, in *Orientierung an Jesus,* 344.

[99] Schürmann, *Jesu Abendmahlshandlung,* 89.

(14:25) one can detect an older vein, which according to F. Hahn belongs 'to the primeval rock of tradition',[100] as scholars nowadays almost universally agree: 'Truly I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God' (Mk. 14:25). 'From now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes' (Lk. 22:15-18; see 1 Cor. 11:26). The passage contains two elements: (1) on the one hand, this meal is – one way or another – Jesus' unequivocal announcement of his imminent death; in other words, it is a farewell to all earthly fellowship (it really is the very last cup that Jesus will share with his friends); (2) on the other hand, Jesus is offering a prospect of renewed fellowship in the kingdom of God. In the context of the church's liturgy the aforementioned 'words of institution' would appear to state these rather vague pronouncements more precisely and explicitly. Yet even in the older text we see the effect of the church's post-Easter practice: it combines two elements, both of which form
[309] part of the Jesus tradition. The hard core of historical fact is Jesus' explicitly uttered conviction that this is the very last cup he will drink with his disciples in his earthly life; the second element, 'until the day when . . .' is secondary.[101] The emphasis is not on the coming meal but on the 'drinking no more' (*ouketi ou mè*). This is the most solid, historically substantiated reference to Jesus' own death. The second clause, 'until . . .' has another source: there is mention elsewhere of the eschatological feast; the combination of the utterance about Jesus' suffering and death with the glory to come is clearly secondary. A prediction of the fate of the son of man thus becomes a promise of salvation in the form of the disciples' future fellowship with Jesus.

If the second clause is secondary, what salvific relevance does the first clause of this old text retain? Despite Israel's rejection of the last prophetic offer of salvation made by God, Jesus, face to face with his coming death, continues to offer his disciples the (last) cup: this shows his *unshaken conviction of salvation*, so that the addition of the 'until' clause in Mark and Luke, albeit secondary, is simply a way of explicating the concrete situation. Jesus' renewed offer of mealtime fellowship or salvation to the disciples, in the face of approaching death, still makes perfect sense to him; he has come to terms with his death, which he manifestly does not feel to be an absurd miscarriage of his mission. Such unassailable religious certainty is surely food for thought. What is the significance of Jesus' conviction that his death will be powerless to obstruct the coming of God's reign which he proclaimed?

Allowing for the diverse interpretations of the eschatological character of

[100] in EvTh 27 (1967), 340-341.

[101] See Berger, *Amen-Worte,* 54-58. Matthew in his gospel retains Mark's 'amen, amen'; 'amen' here is secondary, therefore, after Matthew and Luke had already known the Markan text without 'amen, amen'. Mark adds 'amen' wherever an explicit reference to the coming glory or the coming aeon has been inserted.

Jesus' message, from his preaching and from his whole attitude to life one thing is certain: Jesus was open to *God's* future for man. On the other hand, his whole life evinced loving service to men. 'If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all' (Mk. 9:35); this and similar comments (Mt. 7:12a parallels; Mk. 12:33; Lk. 6:27-28), whose tradition-historical context, although subsequently reworked by the church, is grounded in recollection of the last supper, clearly reflect Jesus' fundamental attitude to life. Pro-existence, being human for others and unconditional obedience to God's will as revealed in the decalogue and in various existential situations, sustained to the point of death, do indeed evince Jesus' fidelity to his message, which *keeps open* God's future, gives God the final word and makes Jesus persevere in loving service to people as a manifestation of God's goodwill towards them. Even where the New Testament ascribes no salvific implication to Jesus' death, it is still perceived as the martyrdom of a prophet. But this in itself suggests that, even in terms of Jesus' overall attitude to life, the distinctive nature of his crucifixion as an act of loving service cannot easily be determined a priori. There is also a danger of projecting our own view of the meaning of Jesus' death onto his attitude to life. [310] In view of Jesus' assurance, even in the face of death, of salvation through the approaching reign of God, one cannot simply regard the murder of this innocent man as just one more case in the long line of innocent victims. That would make his death reason for resignation or despair rather than for the new hope from which the Christian church was born. For from a purely historical perspective his crucifixion was the rejection of Jesus and of his message, hence the total failure of his prophetic ministry. But if Jesus was humiliated by his crucifixion, then this was, even historically, submission to *God*. 'My God, thou art God. I will praise thee' (Ps. 118:28). To a religious person an experience of historical failure and at the same time passionate faith in God's future for man is no contradiction, but a mystery eluding every attempt at theoretical or rational accommodation.

We can justifiably conclude that Jesus felt his death to relate (in some way) to salvation offered by God, a historical consequence of his caring and loving service to and solidarity with people. This is the minimum – but also certain – historical core of the institution story and the account of the passion that we should hang on to. It is not permissible, of course, to explain the older stratum of the pericope analysed above on the basis of the more recent liturgical top stratum; in fact, the latter that should be judged in light of the early text. It is noteworthy, however, that at the last supper, even in the oldest stratum, Jesus still passes the cup − the very last one − to his friends and so continues to offer them his saving fellowship in spite of his approaching death. The link suggested here (and explicated by Mark) is between fellowship with Jesus in the present and saving eschatological fellowship with him which is to come. In

other words, the coming of God's reign remains linked to fellowship with Jesus of Nazareth. The suggestion that fellowship with Jesus is stronger than death appears to be historically integral to these New Testament reports, although there is no logion in which Jesus himself explicitly ascribed salvific import to his death. Neither the veiled (Mt. 12:39 parallels; Lk. 12:50; 13:32-33;
[311] Mk. 10:38-39) nor the explicit predictions of the passion (Mk. 8:31 parallel; 9:30-32 parallels; 10:32-34 parallels) allude to his death as salvation or propitiation. But there is no getting round the historical fact that in the face of death Jesus offered the cup of fellowship to his disciples; this is a sign that he did not just passively submit to death but actively integrated it with his mission as a whole, in other words, that he understood and experienced death as a final, extreme service to God's cause as the cause of men, and that he communicated this self-understanding obliquely to his intimate disciples by way of fellowship at a shared meal. The 'for you' (*hyper* formula), in the sense of Jesus' entire pro-existence, was the historical intention of his whole ministry and was substantiated by his very death. The crux of the argument − against the background of Jesus' life of obedience to the Father and service to men – seems to be encapsulated in the fact that his entire public ministry was *not just an assurance or promise* of salvation but a *concrete offer of salvation* then and there. He did not just talk about God and his reign; wherever he was he brought salvation and God's reign was realized. The active acceptance of his own death or rejection must be understood as Jesus' incorporation of his death into his saving mission of offering salvation, and not simply as a 'notwithstanding'. This applies all the more cogently because even during his life Jesus' mealtime fellowship with sinners conveyed an offer of immediate salvation. Given all this, the impossibility of finding a *verbum ipsissimum* or authentic saying of Jesus that tells us how he regarded and evaluated his death (except the first clause of Mk. 14:25a; Lk. 22:18a) is really irrelevant. Jesus' whole life is the actual interpretation of his death. It contained the very substance of salvation, which could be and was in fact later articulated variously through faith in him. Although the historico-critical method yields no incontrovertible arguments on this score, it does not assert categorically that we have no historical knowledge of how Jesus understood his own death.[102] In my view Jesus' understanding of his death as historically integrated with his mission of tendering salvation is a demonstrable pre-paschal fact − at least as far as the final days of his life are concerned. (This will be confirmed in due course by the 'third day' motif.)

This inference is crucial, for it means that even prior to Easter Jesus was saying, in effect at any rate, that his cause would continue. It was not just a
[312] religious notion based solely on the disciples' Easter experience: his self-

[102] Thus e.g., W. Marxsen, *Erwägungen,* 165; likewise, it seems to me, the exegetically unjustifiable, minimalizing tendency of H. Kessler, *Die theologische Bedeutung des Todes Jesu,* 232-235.

understanding created the possibility and laid the foundation of the subsequent Christian interpretation. There is no discontinuity between Jesus' self-understanding and the Christ proclaimed by the church. If we ask whether the disciples grasped Jesus' purpose before Easter, the answer must be negative. But after the first shock of his death the memory of Jesus' life and especially of the last supper played a vital role in the process of their conversion to faith in Jesus the Christ, the one filled with God's Spirit. That Jesus' self-understanding was correct and true when he saw his death as somehow connected to his saving mission cannot be historically validated; affirming or rejecting it is an act of faith. But that he did so is a fact of history hard to deny.

§3 Historical legal grounds for Jesus' execution

Before examining how Jesus came across to his disciples we should consider his executioners' image of him. In other words: how did his opponents see him and on what legal grounds did they have Jesus executed?

Our analysis of the contrast scheme ('you killed him, but God has raised him to life', to be clarified further in Part Three) showed that the concepts of 'true teacher' and 'prophet from God', as well as those of 'false teacher' and 'pseudo-prophet', had a basic function, especially in Judaism. In late Judaism the criterion of a pseudo-teacher and corrupter of the people who undermined the very essence of the Jewish religiosity was based on Deut. 17:12: 'The man who acts presumptuously, by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or the judge, that man shall die.' In other words, in Israel defying the officiating high priest in the exercise of his judicial function, by virtue of which he was also judge of Jewish orthodoxy, was a capital offence. Contempt for Israel's governing authorities, especially by challenging the orthodoxy of Israel's teachers, was a legal ground for the death penalty.

In post-New Testament, rabbinic literature[103] this Deuteronomic passage was defined more precisely and concretely, tying the trial and execution of a 'false teacher' who leads the people astray to definite criteria. Indeed, after A.D 70 a 'uniform orthodoxy', monitored by Pharisees and rabbis, evolved from the [313]
formerly still pluralistic Jewish doctrine. In Jesus' time the Deuteronomic passage played a crucial role, but its jurisprudence was not spelled out as in later rabbinic writings, so in practice judgment was complicated by divergent interpretations of the Law. What was 'Judaically' possible, valid and legitimate was not so clearly defined as in the burgeoning rabbinic orthodoxy after A.D.

[103] The meaning of Deut. 17:12 has been trenchantly examined (from a historical standpoint) by J. Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees* (Cambridge 1973), 46-52; cf. id., *The targums and rabbinic literature* (Cambridge 1969).

70. In Jesus' time the Jewish parties were so disparate that it was difficult, for instance in the Sanhedrin (then, under the presidency of the high priest, the body judging violations of Jewish teaching and orthopraxis), to reach consensus on condemning a dissident Jewish teacher to death – which was why at that time many actual or reputed 'false teachers' were exiled or (voluntarily) left Jerusalem (e.g. the Qumrân Essenes); but executions of pseudo-teachers or pseudo-prophets were rare.[104] In Jesus' time antagonism between the parties represented in the Sanhedrin was too fierce for that.

The fact that Jesus was condemned as a pseudo-teacher (deceiver of the people) on the basis of Deut. 17:12 implies that the leading parties in the Sanhedrin were able to reach agreement about him, but probably on highly divergent grounds. In its report of conflicting depositions the Markan gospel alludes to the fact that there was no unanimity in the Sanhedrin on the applicability of the Law in Deut. 17:12 to this case. Apart from the pro-Roman, possibly none too rigorous 'Herodians', the other Sanhedrin parties cannot be suspected of a lack of principle, despite their doctrinal differences. Historically it would be wrong to regard the Sanhedrin's inquiry into Jesus' teaching and ministry as a kind of 'show trial', the verdict having been settled in advance. All parties in the Sanhedrin had fundamental objections to Jesus' teaching and public ministry; but the crucial point was whether he came under the Law of Deut. 17:12, and no orthodox Jew would play around with that. In this high court, evidently, there was no consensus on this point − a situation which to this day speaks in favour of the Sanhedrin's fair play; the court did not immediately give in to pressure from certain factions. For most members of the
[314] Sanhedrin, even though they all had fundamental objections to Jesus, maybe even grudges against him, the Law as the revelation of God's will was both norm and guideline, not arbitrary, subjective opinion. This basic stance was apparent again later, when, after Jesus' death, a Pharisee, the lawyer Gamaliel, adjured the Sanhedrin: 'Men of Israel, take care what you do with these men [=the apostles] ... if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!' (Acts 5:34-39). And he won by a unanimous vote. This Jewish mindset must be assumed to have prevailed in the Sanhedrin in the first instance, even though it eventually handed Jesus over to the Romans.

We have said that 'the Pharisees', who feature in the gospels as Jesus' major opponents during his lifetime, fade completely into the background in the account of Jesus' trial and condemnation. Historically this is no coincidence. It concurs with an internal split in the Pharisaic movement, which was completed only after A.D. 70 although the first signs were already evident in Jesus'

[104] J. Bowker, *Jesus,* 42.

time. A uniform Pharisaic orthodoxy became a Jewish phenomenon after the year 70, which is why the Pharisees strike us as ambivalent. In the gospels they seem to be well disposed to Jesus on the one hand, on the other hand maliciously hostile (and in the post-70 A.D. New Testament documents the latter attitude became a cliché). Perhaps unconsciously, the Markan gospel is a historically faithful witness to the division in the chakamite movement of law interpreters that was emerging in Jesus' time between an open, 'liberal' party (in the line of Hillel) and a more stringent wing, which after A.D. 70 came to be called simply 'the Pharisees' (*perushim*).[105] Judaically Jesus' teaching and ministry were more in line with the Pharisaic school of Hillel, so that many Pharisees could well have sympathized with his activities. All the same, even according to the liberalizing notions of the Hillel Pharisees Jesus went too far, so much so that he incurred the odium of this not wholly unsympathetic Pharisaic wing. Like the Hillel Pharisees, Jesus saw the Torah as the expression of a right relationship with God and one's fellow men; but for Jesus this was an expression of the all-controlling, and in every circumstance directly revelatory relationship with God; for the open-minded wing of the Pharisees, on the other hand, the Law − and the Law alone − remained the sole means of conciliation with God and other men.[106] For the sympathetic faction of the Pharisees what Jesus saw as an 'illustration' was an irreplaceable mediator. Hence they had quite fundamental objections to Jesus of Nazareth.

The leading Jewish authorities, who had to judge Jesus' case, were for the most part thoroughly 'law-conscious' and by no means intent on getting rid of him − unless Jesus of Nazareth was attacking the core of Jewish faith in Yahweh. Thus every faction in the Sanhedrin had fundamental objections to Jesus; but there was manifestly no consensus on the question whether his message and actions fell under the condemnation of Deut. 17:12. [315]

Yet Jesus was 'condemned' by a majority vote of the Sanhedrin (we shall draw some finer distinctions in a moment). Historically we must conclude that Jesus was repudiated by the Sanhedrin because 'he was silent' (Mk. 14:60-61). It was this silence – and not what the post-Easter church put into his mouth later on (Mk. 14:62) − that gave the Sanhedrin legal grounds for condemning Jesus. Jesus' silence (vouched for, historically, by various early Christian

[105] In the study first referred to in note 103, Bowker, analyses the ambiguous meaning of the name 'Pharisee' using texts from outside the New Testament and has shown convincingly that it is Mark's gospel which (unconsciously, perhaps, but accurately enough) reflects the transitional and still unsettled meaning of 'Pharisee' in Jesus' time: *Jesus and the Pharisees,* l.c., 1-46.

[106] 'Where Jesus evidently saw in the Torah an exemplification of God's intention to have a real and covenanted relationship with men, the *Chakamim* saw the exemplification of Torah in the details of men's lives as the only possible way to the reality of that relationship' (J. Bowker, l.c., 52). *'Chakamim'* (sages, wise ones) is what the later rabbis called their predecessors in the 'interpretation of the Law'; an offshoot, namely the *'perushim',* are later to become the 'true Pharisees', criticized just as keenly by the rabbis as by the Christian gospels.

traditions) was a critical stance adopted towards the forum that was legally empowered to judge the Jewish orthodoxy of his teaching and praxis. But Jesus refused to submit his teaching and praxis to this court. He remained silent. This certainly does fall under the judgment of Deut. 17:12: if anyone presumes to disobey the officiating high priest or 'judge', 'that man shall die'. Jesus' silence before the Sanhedrin (as in the presence of Herod and Pilate, though 'amended' after Easter with a crushing statement by Jesus) conveys his self-understanding, namely, that he was sent directly *by God* to summon Israel to faith in God: Jesus refused to submit his direct commission by God, his mission, to the Jewish doctrinal authority. His silence (in fact a form of courtly resistance) before the Sanhedrin strikes me as the most salient expression of his self-understanding: just as he refused to perform any legitimating miracles, so he refused to account for his message and ministry to this or any other human religious institution. Only the God who sent him could call him to account. Jesus saw himself as obligated solely to God, who had sent him to Israel. This – albeit in line with traditional prophetism − is what shook the Judaism of his time to the core. According to the Judaic interpretation of Deut. 17:12, therefore, his silence in the face of the legitimate institutional organ of authority in Israel was a valid legal ground for condemning him to death in good (Jewish) conscience. Holding Israel's highest authority in contempt, seems to be the Jewish legal ground for Jesus' condemnation.

[316] Yet an element of doubt remains. Among the members of the Sanhedrin, each of whom would have had his own fundamental objections to Jesus, there were evidently factions unwilling to condemn him to death on the basis of Deut. 17:12, unless it was self-evident in terms of the Torah; certain members of the Sanhedrin apparently had serious doubts. Was Jesus of Nazareth in fact a 'pseudo-teacher' as defined in Deut. 17:12? For many members of the Sanhedrin this was a matter of religious conscience, in spite of their objections to Jesus arising from their theological conceptions. (At any rate the New Testament preserves one memory: that of the Sanhedrin member Joseph of Arimathea, for whom the application of Deut. 17:12 to Jesus was at least problematic.)

That is not all. Although according to a pre-Markan tradition (Mk. 14:64) the Sanhedrin 'gave as its verdict that he deserved death', a later chapter (Mk. 15:1a) says: 'In the early morning the high priest with the elders and lawyers, the whole Sanhedrin, came to a decision': Jesus was to be handed over to Pilate, the Roman procurator (Mk. 15:1b). This seems indicative of the 'Jewish impasse' in which the Sanhedrin found itself: everybody was against Jesus, but when it came to legally valid grounds for condemning him there was no general agreement. Only at this point does the guilt of the Sanhedrin begin. There was no lack of unanimity about handing Jesus over to the Romans!

In this second phase of the Sanhedrin's session they did indeed arrive at solid consensus: Jesus was to be delivered to Pilate (Mk. 15:1b; see 15:1a). This decision has often been interpreted on the basis of the alleged fact that only the Roman occupier had the right actually to carry out a Jewish capital sentence. But historically this is highly debatable.[107] Only a few years previously (maybe even more recently) it had been possible for Herod, without any sanction from the Romans (albeit not in Jerusalem), to have John the Baptist beheaded. Everything suggests that (because of its actual composition) the Sanhedrin had such grave doubts that it failed to reach agreement on the question of the applicability of Deut. 17:12 to the case of Jesus, despite everybody's objections to him. It argues in favour of the high court as a body.

Nevertheless we are faced with the fact that at a second sitting (Mk. 15:1b) the Sanhedrin resolved − this time unanimously − 'to deliver Jesus to the Romans'. Even from a Jewish point of view this was the Sanhedrin's error and [317] manifest guilt in condemning Jesus. On the basis of divergent interpretations of the Law all its members had fundamental objections to Jesus of Nazareth; but many of them did not find sufficient grounds in his teaching and ministry to subject him to the judgment of Deut. 17:12. Because of the fundamental objections that, from various standpoints, all members of the Sanhedrin had against Jesus, they resorted in a second session to a legal ploy: in view of the political implications of his public ministry, let us transfer the 'Jesus affair' to the Romans. Let the Romans decide! For diverse reasons Herodians, Sadducees and Pharisees of very different persuasions − all of them nonetheless prompted by their own fundamental objections to the 'Jesus affair' in Israel − were able to reach consensus. All parties agreed that in view of rumours among the people the Jesus phenomenon was potentially dangerous for the Romans. Given the concrete situation (with the execution of John the Baptist still fresh in their memory), it certainly was. The cry of the Jewish populace, 'Crucify him!'(Mk. 15:14) − elaborated in Jn. 19:15b to the (historically inconceivable) 'We have no king but [the Roman] Caesar' − reflects un-historically, but ultimately truthfully enough, a historical state of affairs, namely that the Jewish Sanhedrin found no adequate legal grounds for condemning Jesus to death and could reach no consensus on the matter (despite probable pressure from the Sadducees and Herodians in particular). What they could and did reach was a majority decision to hand a compatriot, Jesus of Nazareth, over (for allegedly political reasons) to the Romans – bitterly hated as they were by most members of the Sanhedrin themselves!

In that sense Jesus was indeed condemned because he remained true to his prophetic mission from God, a mission which he refused to justify to any

[107] See the discussion of this in E. Bammel (ed.), *The trial of Jesus* (London 1970), the study by D. Catchpole, 'The problem of the historicity of the Sanhedrin trial', 47-65.

authority other than God himself. In all this Jesus continued to rely on the Father who had sent him.

The Father, however, did not intervene. Nowhere, indeed, did Jesus see any visible aid from him whose cause he had so much at heart. Historically it can hardly be denied that Jesus was torn by inner conflict between his consciousness of his mission and the utter silence of the one whom he was accustomed to call his Father. At least the historical kernel of the struggle in Gethsemane cannot be argued away; and of Jesus' words from the cross as reported in the gospels only his loud cry can be vouched for historically. This puts severe strain on Jesus' message of the speedily approaching, humanely oriented reign of God and of a relationship with God not bound by the Law.
[318] The question is whether a visible, empirically verifiable presence of God has the *final* word, or whether God does not mean to give us his ultimate message through Jesus' ultimate reconciliation with his fate.

Chapter 2

JESUS' LAST PROPHETIC SIGN: HIS DEATH LEFT FOR OTHERS TO INTERPRET

The previous chapter attempted to provide a historical reconstruction of how Jesus' self-understanding was affected by growing awareness of the unavoidability of his approaching death. A great deal depends on the (mainly implicit) presuppositions underlying such a critical inquiry. Thus H. Schürmann's endeavour to establish Jesus' assessment of his own death clearly rests on the premise of the post-Easter Christian kerygma of redemption; he seeks to demonstrate that one way or another this dogma reflects Jesus' self-understanding. In my view his attempt is completely uncritical of kerygma and dogma. By this I do not mean the dogma criticism of an unbeliever or an eclectic person, but that of a believing Christian who, proceeding from the 'earthly Jesus', seeks to test Christian *conceptions* of the saving significance of Jesus' death in order to see if a Christian soteriology ties us to concepts like 'ransom', 'propitiation', 'substitution', 'satisfaction', et cetera. In Part One of this book we constantly pointed out that in its New Testament the early church reflects on the impact that the Jesus event had on a group of people; it appeared to entail recurrent tension between the offer of the reality which Jesus was on the one hand and, on the other, the religious expectations, aspirations, ideas and ideologies used by others to verbalise what Jesus was about and eventually commit it to writing in the New Testament. As believers we are tied to whatever Jesus intended and not directly to those articulations. So if we critically examine the Jesus event and his self-understanding from a position of faith, the exegetically vague and meagre findings still tell us more [319] than that Jesus may not have arrived at the clear articulations of the early Christian communities. Then, like the first Christians did against their background, one may oneself reflect as a Christian from one's own background on the findings of this historical reconstruction. The pro-existence or loving service which Jesus' entire life was and which (according to historical and

exegetical analysis) reached a climax in his death, may have to be expressed in terms of emphases and distinctions other than those of the New Testament interpretations, conditioned as they were by prevailing cultural and religious concepts. That raises the question whether excessive precision may not do more harm than good. Precision about an event that is a mystery always impoverishes it and so verges on heretical misrepresentation. This applies all the more because we are dealing with a violent death. There is no getting away from the fundamental aspect of negativity inherent in such a death, especially as it actually entails a rejection of the message conveyed by Jesus' life. This situation clearly requires us either to discover its religious meaning or to declare it utterly meaningless. Was this coming event reconcilable with Jesus' preaching of God's reign and his life in accordance with it? Or would God's kingdom come notwithstanding the failure of Jesus himself? Can God remain sovereignly free towards his eschatological messenger, Jesus of Nazareth? Does God's word apply even to him: 'My ways are not your ways' (Isa. 55:8)? Is the kingdom of God his corrective alternative to all that was and is accomplished in our history, also by Jesus? Ultimately Jesus' death is a question to God − the God whom Jesus proclaimed. Jesus solidarity with the oppressed and outcasts is evident in the analysis of his message, preaching, beatitudes and praxis. Can we suppose that God himself, through his trial and execution, made him one of the oppressed and the outcasts so as to make his solidarity with them a genuine identification? Is such a view not blasphemous, in that it ascribes to God what the human history of injustice did to Jesus?

But Jesus' death is not the end of the story. We still have to examine the sequel.

SECTION 3

THE CHRISTIAN STORY AFTER JESUS' DEATH: THE KINGDOM OF GOD TAKES ON THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS CHRIST

Chapter 1

THE DISCIPLES SCANDALIZED BY THE ARREST AND EXECUTION OF JESUS

Literature. Sch. Brown, *Apostasy and perseverance in the theology of Luke* (Rome 1969); H. Conzelmann, *Geschichte des Urchristentums* (NTD-Ergänzungsgreihe, 5) (Göttingen 1971); A. Dauer, *Passionsgeschichte,* op.cit..; M. Hengel, 'Die Ursprünge der christlichen Mission', NTS 18 (1971-1972), 15-38; H. Kasting, *Die Anfänge der urchristlichen Mission* (Beih. EvTh, 55) (Munich 1969); G. Klein, 'Der Verleugnung des Petrus', ZThK 58 (1961), Z85-328, and 'Die Berufung des Petrus', ZNW 58 (1967), 1-44; E. Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte* (Göttingen 1970), 70-108; Ch. Masson, 'Le reniement de Pierre', RHPR 37 (1957), 24-35; G. Schneider, *Verleugnung, Verspottung und Verhör Jesu nach Lk. 2, 54-71* (Munich 1969), and *Die Passion Jesu,* l.c. (Munich 1973), 73-82; G. Schille, *Anfänge der Kirche* (Beih. EvTh, 43) (Munich 1966), and 'Anfange der christlichen Mission', KuD 15 (1969), 320-339; Th. J. Weeden, *The Mark-traditions,* 26-51; M. Wilcox, 'The denial-sequence in Mk. 14:26-31, 66-72, NTS 17 (1970-1971), 426-436.

§1 Historicity and superimposed interpretation in the gospels

In Christian proclamation the theme of Peter's denial and the other disciples' loss of nerve – although the latter is not much emphasized – is not problematic; [321]
generally it features only in a moralizing vein. All the same, I am convinced that the breakdown of the disciples' morale is not just a minor episode of human frailty, but that this event, issuing in the 'conversion' of the disciples after Jesus' death, played a vital role in shaping the tradition about the appearances of Jesus, which still shows traces of Jewish conversion stories modelled on such visions.

Historically, however, they raise all sorts of difficulties.[1] As a result some commentators even maintain that Peter's denial of Jesus is unhistorical: it is a Christian, post-Easter *theologoumenon*.[2] The question is: what could have motivated the incipient church to invent this incident − so very embarrassing for its founders and first spiritual leaders − only to play it down again afterwards? For we find that, at any rate in the four gospels, the event, while not passed over in complete silence, is gradually extenuated. In Mark Jesus rebukes Peter, who cannot even stay awake while Jesus in agonized prayer is facing up to death (Mk. 14:37-38); but almost at once, in 14:40, comes the semi-excuse 'their eyes were very heavy'. Matthew 26:36-46 introduces no change; but Luke does not mention Jesus' rebuke to Peter: it is generalized (Lk. 22:46) and the disciples are said to be sleeping 'for sorrow' (22:45). Luke says nothing about the disciples running away. And in John 18:8 we read how Jesus himself begs the soldiers to let his disciples go; it contains no reference to the disciples falling asleep during Jesus' agony in Gethsemane, or indeed to the agony itself. This tendency to exonerate is very likely a sign of the authenticity of the tradition about the disciples turning tail. On the other hand the 'exonerating tendency' may be purely a synoptic illusion. As Mark's account of the episode is deliberately and for thematic reasons exaggerated (see immediately below), the other evangelists (maybe no longer seeing the point of Mark's theological thesis or in reaction against these unhistorical exaggerations) may have cut down the account handed down to them to its proper proportions. In view of the status of the texts, we also have to distinguish between the desertion of Jesus by all the disciples and the story, singled out and emphasized, of a specific act of denial by Peter.

The synoptic evangelists' accounts of the disciples' loss of nerve and of Peter's denial derive mostly from the Markan tradition or Markan redaction;
[322] even so, both Luke and Matthew draw on their own sources,[3] and their view of the disciples differs from Mark's. It is clear from an analysis of Mark's characterization in his version that in describing the disciples' attitude prior to Jesus' death he is substantiating a theological position: the disciples understand nothing about Jesus; they are unable to perceive who he is; they are totally uncomprehending and mistaken, culminating in denial and

[1] See specified literature, especially the discussion between E. Linnemann and G. Klein.

[2] Thus e.g. R. Bultmann, *Tradition,* 301; especially G. Klein, 'Verleugnung' (argument of the whole article). This again raises the problem of whether the disciples did or did not flee *to Galilee*. They *did* flee to Galilee, according to Bultmann, Käsemann, Grasz, Finegan, Vögtle, Seidensticker, etc.; they did *not* flee to Galilee, according to Marxsen, Weisz, Holtzmann, Michaelis, Lohmeyer, Bertram, Taylor, Thüsing, Schenke, Weeden, etc. The former hypothesis seems to me the more likely, because of very ancient traditions indicating Galilee and only thence finding their way also into the Jerusalem traditions.

[3] E.g. Mt. 13:13; 13:16-17; 13:51; 10:40-41; 12:49-50; Lk. 5:1-11; 6:20.

apostasy.[4] In Mark's gospel[5] the disciples' bafflement, far from decreasing, intensifies, while the populace shows some understanding. Whereas even non-Jews recognize Jesus' miraculous powers (Mk. 7:25-30), the disciples do not (Mk. 4:40; 8:4 and 8:14-21). In Matthew and Luke all these passages are reduced to juster proportions.[6] Mark makes a great deal of the fact that Peter and the disciples misunderstood Jesus. In his view even Peter's alleged 'profession of faith' at Caesarea Philippi (Mk. 8:27-33: 'You are the messiah') is no such thing, but reflects a complete misunderstanding of messianism, as appears in subsequent verses when Peter disclaims the prospect of suffering and is called 'a satan' by Jesus (8:32-33). Jesus forbade all talk about messianism (8:30); for Mark it was a heretical *theios anèr* Christology.[7] After this confession (by Peter) the conflict between Jesus and the disciples became general (9:15-18,19-23,23-27). John and other disciples forbade somebody to cast out devils, seemingly for the sole reason that the man did not belong to Jesus' band of followers (9:38, 9:34-40); they also prevented children from approaching Jesus (10:13-16). Judas in particular failed to grasp the point of Jesus' anointment in Bethany (as an anticipated anointment for burial); in other words, his act of betrayal lies in his refusal to accept the *suffering* son of man. In this second series of texts Matthew and Luke also omit the most unfavourable allusions to the disciples in the Markan gospel, although they are sometimes retained, minus their Markan acerbity.[8] A third phase and series of texts in

[4] According to Weeden, *Mark-traditions,* 138-168, the gospel of Mark is a frontal attack on 'the twelve'; the same thing is said in a quite different connection by L. Schenke, *Auferstehungsverkündigung,* 21-22, 51; see also J. Schreiber, 'Die Christologie des Markusevangeliums', in ZThK 58 (1961) (154-183), 178-179; Mark shows some inclination to pass judgment on the twelve for staying in Jerusalem instead of − s the Markan gospel would have it – going at Jesus' behest to Galilee, the place of Jesus' message, exorcisms and healings. Mark's criticism is apparently applied to the 'church of Jerusalem', which seems to have been opposed to the 'Hellenistic' – in the sense of 'Galilean' – mission. Mk. 16:8 is unmistakably critical of 'the twelve'. This criticism in Mark is undeniable; the question is only how it should be interpreted. And Weeden's thesis of Mark's 'vendetta' against the twelve is extremely interesting but seems to me to founder on some unresolved difficulties in the text. How is Weeden to explain the fact that, as Mark himself mentions, Peter, after having denied Jesus, 'broke down and wept' (Mk. 14:72d)? Then too how can he explain that – despite the women's having said nothing (Mk. 16:8) – according to Mark's own account the disciples *already knew* (had heard from Jesus) that he, Jesus, would 'go before [them] to Galilee' (Mk. 14:28)? Alas, Weeden does not engage in a structural analysis of the Markan gospel.

[5] Mk. 1:37; 4:10,13,38-41; 5:31; 6:37,51-52; 7:17; 8:4,14-21.

[6] Matthew omits Mk. 1:37-38; 4:13 and 6:37; Mk. 4:38-41: in Mt. 8:25 the disciples do show understanding; Mk. 6:51-52 as against Mt. 14:33. All insinuations about the disciples' lack of comprehension (in Mk. 6:51-52; 7:17-18; 8:4,14,21) are eliminated in Luke, who also omits Mk. 6:45-48, 26 in its entirety.

[7] See also Mk. 9:31-33, 35; 10:35-45; 10:42 and 10:43-44; 10:23-31 and 10:23-28; 8:34-35 and 10:21-22.

[8] E.g. Mk. 8:32-33 and Mt. 16:22ff., 16:17; Matthew also retains Mk. 10:23-31, but qualifies: Mt. 19:28. Mt. 17:15ff keeps Mk. 9:17ff; Mt. 26:8 and Mk. 14:4; – Luke frequently qualifies (Mk. 10:14 with Lk.18:16; Mk. 10:23-31 with Lk. 18:24-30), but nonetheless keeps a good deal from Mark here, yet placing the course of events within God's providential plan. Luke apparently has access to new tradition material in a similar pejorative vein regarding John's and James's lack of understanding

Mark introduce the denial by Peter and the apostasy of all the disciples, along with Judas' decision to betray Jesus (Mk. 14:10ff). From this moment on (14:10) Mark as good as suggests that the disciples as a whole are little better than Judas. In fact, despite their protestations the three who were to become the pillars of the Jerusalem church − Peter, James and John − fell asleep (14:31) in Jesus' hour of tribulation (14:32-42). Then comes Judas' act of betrayal (14:43-52), the flight of all the disciples (14:50) and Peter's denial of the suffering Jesus (14:66-72). Here Matthew (26:14-16, 36-46, 47-56, 66-75) faithfully reproduces
[323] Mark. For his part Luke waters down Mark's account completely; he calls the betrayal by Judas − and Peter's denial, for that matter − 'the work of Satan' (22:3, 31); they were not fully responsible for what they did. The disciples even empathize with Jesus' agony, for it is from sorrow that they drift into sleep (Lk. 22:40-45); more especially, Luke makes absolutely no mention of the disciples running away: they remain essentially faithful to Jesus (see Lk. 22:28ff).

Much of what Mark says about the disciples' weaknesses is also found in the (in literary terms independent) gospel of John; but to John the disciples' lack of understanding has nothing to do with their identification of Jesus (Jn. 1:35-51; 2:11; 6:66-67, 68-69; 16:30): they remain staunch in their faith[9] − it is the Jews who are unbelieving (Jn. 12:37-40). John does report both the disciples' desertion of Jesus and Peter's denial (Jn. 18:2ff, 15-27; 16:32), but the disciples flee with Jesus' express permission (Jn. 16:32). We may conclude from this that, although Mark exaggerates and is caustic about the disciples' attitude because he has a specific purpose in view, he is not simply fantasizing: he takes over existing tradition material, but for some reason wants to put the apostles in a dim light. His portrayal of the twelve reveals his distinctive view of Jesus' disciples. Paul, on the other hand, mentions nothing of the kind; and if Mark's picture had been historically accurate, Paul would not have failed to invoke it in his trouble with the Christian leaders in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:11-14). Furthermore, and importantly, the pre-Markan traditions contradict Mark's view.[10] In the source peculiar to Matthew and Luke, which according to exegetical consensus belongs to a very early tradition, 'the twelve', along with Peter, constituted a highly esteemed – even idealized − council in early Christianity.[11] It also indicates that after Jesus' arrest Peter actually attempted 'to go after him' (Lk. 22:32b as an addition to Lk. 22:31-32a, meant to

(Lk. 9:51-55; cf. 10:23-24 and 19:39-40).

[9] There is indeed a failure to understand Jesus' teaching: Jn. 11:7-16; 12:16; 13:6-8; 14:4-9; 16:16-18; but they had no need to grasp everything before Jesus' death (Jn. 16:12-13,25). The resurrection will remove all misapprehension (Jn. 2:22; 12:16; 13:7), through the power of the 'Paraclete' (14:16-17; 16:7 in association with 14:25-26): then the disciples will be, along with Jesus, one with the Father (17:6-26).

[10] See Weeden, *Mark-traditions,* 42.

[11] Mt. 16:17-19 and Lk. 22:31-32.

harmonize the two traditions − 22:33-34 and 22:54, 55-67). This does not mean that the tradition on which Mark drew is not equally early − only that Mark 'arranged' his material. On the other hand 'the twelve' are also a highly reputable body in the tradition of the Q community.[12] What emerges particularly clearly from Luke is that he is citing a non-Markan source, which nevertheless − like Mark − has Jesus reprimanding John and James (Lk. 9:51-56); this goes to show that Luke (critical, it is true, of Mark's biased portrayal of Jesus' disciples) in no way seeks to eliminate or tone down the negative echoes of the tradition about them (deriving from the Q source). But whereas in that [324] source Jesus commends the disciples for perceiving what others fail to see (especially Lk. 10:23-24=Mt. 13:16-17), in the Markan gospel the disciples see nothing whatever (Mk. 4:13; 7:18; 8:17, 21; 9:32).[13]

From this quite varied picture which the gospels paint of Jesus' close disciples, especially Peter, we conclude that there is no uniform tradition about their actual behaviour at the time of Jesus' arrest. Apart from Mark, all other traditions take a kinder view of the apostles' conduct prior to Easter. On the basis of some (despite Weeden's in my view as yet unresolved thesis) theological intention, the Markan gospel is intent on depicting the disciples' behaviour before Easter as unfavourably as possible. What does cause concern is the fact that the gospel of Mark (apart from the pseudo-Markan appendage to his gospel, Mk. 16:9-20), having presented this gloomy picture of the disciples, actually says no more about the twelve − except for the apparition of an angel to Mary Magdalene and Salome, who are charged to tell the disciples: 'He is going before you to Galilee, there you will see him, as he told you' (Mk. 16:7: Markan redaction), whereas the end of Mark's own gospel intimates that this (going to Galilee instead of staying in Jerusalem) was just what the disciples did not do.[14] Nowhere in the authentic Mark do we read of a solemn investiture of the disciples as 'apostles', as reported in the other gospels.[15]

Thus the Jesus tradition is by no means clear about the behaviour of the

[12] Mt. 5:1-12=Lk. 6:20-23; Mt. 13:16-17=Lk. 10:23-24; Mt. 19:28=Lk. 22:30. See Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 335.

[13] But even Mark, when overstating things, obviously means to keep within bounds: 4:11 (unless this is meant ironically).

[14] This, it seems to me, is the 'strong point' in Weeden's nonetheless dubious final solution, see *Mark-traditions,* 44. Of Jesus' disciples there is no further mention: either at the crucifixion (Mk. 15:22-41), or at the burial of Jesus (15:42-47), or at the 'holy tomb' (16:1-8), unless it be – in this last case – to drive home the point that they have not done what Jesus wanted done. I do not find Weeden's 'point' here satisfactorily resolved anywhere in the exegetical literature. Yet it seems to me important.

[15] Thus Mt. 28:16-20; Lk. 24:36-49; Jn. 20:19-23; Acts 1:8. Mark says nothing about all this, so that the consensus – on the increase during the last few years – that Mk. 16:8 is indeed the 'intended' ending to Mark's gospel has in my opinion theological presuppositions in Mark's view of 'the twelve' – even though Weeden's solution to this problem seems to me too radical, having regard to the posture of Mark's own text in the gospel. One thing is clear: Mark wants nothing to do with a tradition of 'Jesus' appearances' to the twelve.

disciples. According to Luke 'all his acquaintances, and the women who had followed him from Galilee' were standing at a distance (from the scene of the crucifixion), looking on (Lk. 23:49); Mark on the other hand says nothing about 'the disciples', only about female disciples at the cross (Mk. 15:40-41); for after Jesus' arrest 'they all [meaning the male disciples] forsook him and fled' (Mk. 14:50). Mark 14:27 speaks of all the disciples 'falling away'. The Johannine gospel also refers to the disciples' 'flight homewards' (to Galilee, Jn. 16:32). Certainly there is a difference between Mk. 14:27-31, where there is no mention of flight but of 'being scandalized', of 'taking offence' (that is, stumbling in their faith in Jesus) and Mk. 14:43-52 with its clear reference to 'a flight'. It would seem that there is no literary connection between these two blocks of tradition, as there is between Mk. 14:27-31 and 14:54, 66-72, where Peter, according to this tradition, follows at a distance as Jesus is taken away, but in
[325] spite of his attempt 'to follow him' nevertheless denies him three times.

The underlying implication of 'being scandalized by someone' or 'taking offence at someone' in the synoptics is the exact opposite of 'believing in someone' (Mk. 6:3 parallel Mt. 13:57; Mt. 26:31,35 parallel Lk. 7:23). By referring to Zech. 13:7 Mark (14:27b) intimates that the break with Jesus also dissolves the bond between his followers: the disciples simply part company. But Matthew makes the citation from Zechariah refer only to Jesus' arrest, not to what followed − the scattering of the disciples (Mt. 25:56). Peter's 'denying three times' is a literary device to show that his denial of Jesus was complete. In all fairness, therefore, it is difficult to maintain that all the disciples ran away, while Peter tried to stay behind.[16] Historically the hard core of the tradition is that all the disciples in one way or another let Jesus down. Peter's individual betrayal would appear to be a later literary representation, partly inspired by Peter's subsequent position in early Christianity, of the fact that all the disciples faltered. Mark 14:31, after Peter's staunch insistence that 'he at any rate' would not defect, puts added emphasis on 'they all said the same'. The flight of all the disciples seems to reflect a Markan intention.[17] Mark 14:50, 51-52 is obviously associated with the theme of the disciples incomprehension. He wants to show that Jesus trod his path of suffering alone, forsaken by everybody. That is his religious view: the disciples had to desert him. Yet, again according to Mark, their flight is covered by God's plan of salvation: Mark alone (14:27) cites the 'divine must' by citing Zech. 13:7 (see Mk. 14:49b and 14:21a, 41b). The account of the flight, according to exegetes, is also Markan in style (Mk. 1:18, 20; 4:36; 8:13; 12:2 and 14:50; otherwise only − independently of Mark − in Mt. 22:22 and 26:44). For Mark the opposite of

[16] Etta Linnemann's line of argument seems to me to the point *(Passions-geschichte,* l.c., 92-93).
[17] G. Schneider, *Die Passion Jesu,* 46-47, accepting the historical core of the single denial by Peter (74).

following Jesus or 'going after him' is to forsake and deny him. The disciples' flight is their breach with discipleship: not one followed him to the end (Mk. 14:51-52). According to Mark Jesus' only true disciples are those who follow him to the cross (Mk. 8:31-35). His gospel must be read in that context: that is how he intended it.

Although differing essentially from Mark, Luke endorses this viewpoint. And this is evidently not to be explained by the fact that Luke had more sources at his disposal (in particular the source said to be peculiar to Luke),[18] but rather by Luke's own reworking of the single Markan source,[19] which he reinterprets by giving a separate account of Peter's denial as opposed to the mass defection of the disciples.[20] Luke does not admit any such defection; he [326] excises it from the Markan account: the disciples do not run away (he drops Mk. 14:50); they even use swords to defend their master (Lk. 22:50; see 22:38), and − faithful to him, though helpless − they all stand at the foot of the cross (Lk. 23:49). Mark's prediction of their total apostasy is simply expunged by Luke, at least in the sense that it is attenuated and also linked with a logion, deriving from a source peculiar to Luke, concerning Jesus' special support of Peter − a promise itself weakened by the interpolation 'when you have turned again' (Lk. 22:32). Luke is manifestly intent on defending Peter. According to him Peter does not actually deny Jesus; he tells a white lie. It is a lie, but not a disavowal: 'I have nothing to do with it', that is, I'm staying out of it ('none of my business!'). Thus, allowing for their respective viewpoints, the difference between Luke and Mark is not as big as a first reading might suggest.

The disciples' flight is treated in the New Testament primarily from a theological standpoint, as taking offence at Jesus and 'falling away' (Mk. 14:27a), but at the same time as preordained, 'according to the Scriptures' (14:27b). Here Mark seriously tampered with his material: he acknowledges neither the general flight nor its prediction.[21] What he does acknowledge is that the disciples were not present as Jesus' passion unfolded and so did not 'follow' him as it behoves disciples to do. Mark's exaggeration is meant to drive home the idea of following the *suffering* Jesus. Whereas in Luke Peter's denial occurs before the interrogation of Jesus and his solemn confession, Mark has the denial take place after the trial and confession which cost Jesus his life. Jesus' confession is contrasted with Peter's denial, who in that way escaped the suffering. Mark quite clearly relates the disciples' flight to their reassembling after Easter. They had all fallen from their faith (Mk. 14:27a) and Jesus went

[18] The position held by Bultmann, Grundmann, Rengstorf and other commentators.
[19] Thus Schürmann, Blinzler, Dupont, Linnemann and especially Schneider, who has made an exact analysis of this detail and considers a Markan derivation for the denial pericope (with a peculiarly Lukan redaction) to be very likely indeed.
[20] E. Linnemann, *Passionsgeschichte,* 93-95.
[21] G. Schneider, *Die Passion Jesu,* 75.

'before the disciples and Peter to Galilee' (Mk. 16:7).

Yet a prediction of Peter's denial is inserted after the mention of this faintheartedness in Mk. 14:29-31. Furthermore, exegetes generally are agreed that the pericope about Peter's denial (Mk. 14:66-72) was originally an independent tradition, before it was inserted into the passion narrative. Mark is the sole source for all its variants in the tradition; according to G. Schneider's painstaking analysis Lk. 22:54b-61 does not derive from a separate source but
[327] is a Lukan redaction of the Markan material.[22] The fact that Peter's denial is interpolated may mean that Mark did not find Peter's flight in his tradition. On the contrary, his tradition told him that Peter followed the Lord into the court of the high priest − Mark himself modifying this, however, with the phrase 'at a distance' (Mk. 14:54 is Markan; see 5:6; 8:3; 11:13; 15:40). Despite his good intentions and his timid attempt to 'follow Jesus' Peter succumbed. Thus Mark (14:30-31) can speak of all the disciples − Peter not excepted − as losing heart (cf. Mk. 14:29, 'they all ... but not I,' says Peter; whereupon Jesus foretells the denial). Luke, on the other hand, stresses Peter's attempt to follow Jesus (*akolouthein,* Lk. 22:54b, in the imperfect): to be sure, Peter tells a lie, but without repudiating his Jesus. For Luke Peter's negative response is not a particular instance of the disciples' general desertion (Luke omits Mk. 14:27-28): Peter's faith in Jesus is not going to flag or fail (Lk. 22:31-32). According to Luke the disciples do not apostasize: Jesus' sufferings and death do not mark a hiatus in their faith before and after Easter. At a glance from Jesus Peter is 'turned again' (Lk. 22:32 and 22:61).[23] Mark, on the other hand, emphasizes that Peter's attempt was not carried through to the end; he wants to drive home that Peter did not, after all, follow his master in his suffering − not out of a kind of anti-Petrine bias, but because of the harassment and persecution of Christians by their Jewish compatriots: that was when it was especially important to follow Jesus and not let him down. So Peter is an admonitory example: even those in authority have their failings. By dovetailing prediction and denial Mark gives Peter's recollection of 'what Jesus had said to him' (Mk. 14:72b)[24] its full theological significance.

The motif in the Christian tradition of the disciples' faintheartedness, therefore, is embedded in the experience of actual frailty, on the presupposition of faith in Jesus.[25] Later the disciples felt their faltering to have been a failure of their faith (*oligopistia*). But it also provided the basis for potential conversion to follow Jesus anew. Despite their faintheartedness they knew themselves to be − after Jesus' death − in the merciful hand of God. That

[22] G. Schneider, *Verleugnung,* l.c., 73-95.
[23] Brown, *Apostasy,* 70-71; Schneider, *Passion Jesu,* 81-82.
[24] Cf. 1 Cor. 7:10; 9:14; 1 Thess. 4:15-16; Acts 20:35, etc. Especially M. Wilcox, *Denial-sequence,* 426-436.
[25] Linnemann, *Passionsgeschichte,* 103.

is something they learned from the words and deeds of Jesus.

§2 The disciples scatter and reassemble: the problem entailed [328]

While Mark found nothing in his tradition about Peter's separate denial of Jesus (all he found was his attempt to follow Jesus), he did include Peter in the general defection of the disciples, apparently on the strength of the tradition that, apart from the women, not only the disciples but Peter as well were not present at Jesus' ordeal on the cross. There came a moment when Peter gave up his attempt to 'follow Jesus'. Mark (possibly on the basis of some import already attached to it in the tradition) gives this fact − in itself real enough − concrete form (which in itself is more of a literary composition than an account of historical facts). That this special interest in Peter's conduct during the passion ties up with Peter's leadership position in the early church has already been mentioned; but that very position related to his attempt to follow Jesus (remembered by the community), his failure to persist with such attempts and also to the many traditions that Peter was the first (male) disciple to turn to Jesus as the living Lord (see below).

M. Dibelius already connected Peter's denial with the Easter appearances (Mk. 14:28 with 14:29-31).[26] Most exegetes do not concur with this view. At all events, this positive correlation of the two occurrences was Mark's express intention: he connects the disciples' going their own ways with a scriptural text: 'I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered' (Zech. 13:7, in Mk. 14:27). Thus the scattering of the disciples becomes part of a divine plan. The counterpoint is the disciples' reassembling around Jesus: 'But (after I am raised up) I will go before you to Galilee' (Mk. 14:27-28). This tradition, then, seems to posit an intrinsic link between the disciples' desertion and breaking up as a group, and their regrouping after Easter. John 21:15-17 likewise connects, albeit indirectly, Peter's denial with one of Jesus' post-Easter appearances. It is possible, therefore, despite E. Linnemann's counter-arguments,[27] that the original link that Mark perceived between denial and appearance (as a conversion vision; see below) was why the Christian tradition incorporated the denial into its proclamation, even though this relationship may have faded in [329] the memory of the established local churches.[28] The snag with this thesis is that

[26] *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Tübingen 1961[4]), 216.
[27] *Passionsgeschichte,* 82.
[28] Although, unfortunately, H. Conzelmann provides no evidence or reference whatever in his book (admittedly meant as a general introduction), *Geschichte des Urchristentums* (Göttingen 1971), still he baldly asserts in it: 'The fact that Jesus appeared (first) to Simon Peter Cephas is confirmed by Lk. 24:34. On this appearance depends Peter's prominent position in the first years of the church. It stands out from the background that before the death of Jesus he denied his master' (27). In other words, he too makes a connection between appearance and denial. See also J. Jeremias, *Der Opfertod Jesu Christi* (Calwer-Hefte, 62) (Stuttgart 1963).

the link between the denial and Jesus' appearances has a very flimsy basis: in fact only Mark's personal perspective (Mk. 14:28; 14:29-31 and 16:7; and a vague allusion in Jn. 21:15-17). But is that basis really as flimsy as it appears at first sight? If the appearances of Jesus recorded in the gospels were indeed modelled on Jewish conversion visions, then the tradition of those appearances − widely disseminated in the early church – also supports the notion of an essential connection between denial and regrouping (see a later chapter). In that case Mark, who makes no mention of any 'appearances' but who explicitly associates the scattering of the disciples with Jesus preceding his disciples into Galilee once more (an eschatological reassembling of the disciples), does not have to be seen as counter-evidence because of his 'isolated' perspective, but instead is a different expression of what in other traditions is described as 'appearances'. The Lukan manifestation stories indicate that the early church was more variegated than Luke envisages in Acts. We shall return to this point once we have looked at the manifestation stories.

Chapter 2

'WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?' (LK. 24:5)

Introduction: local and official traditions of early Christianity

General literature (specific literature passim in text and below, Part Three). M. Albertz, 'Zur Formgeschichte der Auferstehungsberichte', ZAW 21 (1922), 259-269; H. W. Bartsch, *Das Aujerstehungszeugnis. Sein historisches und sein theologisches Problem* (Hamburg 1965); P. Benoit, *Passion et résurrection du Seigneur* (Paris 1966); J. Broer, *Die Urgemeinde und das Grab Jesu* (Munich 1972); H. Cazelles et al., *Le langage de la foi dans l'Écriture et dans le monde actuel* (Lectio Divina, 72) (Paris 1972) (cited *Lectio Divina,* n. 72); H. Freih. von Campenhausen, *Der Ablauf der Osterereignisse und das leere Grab* (Heidelberg [330]
1966); H. Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit* (Tübingen 1964[5]), 85-86 and 188-192; C. H. Dodd, 'The appearances of the risen Lord', *Studies in the gospel* (in memory of R. H. Lightfoot) (Oxford 1955), 9-35; J. Delorme, 'Résurrection et tombeau de Jésus: Mc. 16:1-8 dans la tradition évangélique', *La résurrection du Christ et l'exégèse moderne* (Lectio Divina, 50) (Paris 1969), 105-151 (cited *Lectio Divina,* n. 50), and *La résurrection de Jésus dans le langage du Nouveau Testament* (Lectio Divina, 72) (Paris 1972), 101-182 (cited *Lectio Divina,* n. 72); E. Fascher, 'Anastasis, resurrectio, Auferstehung', ZNW 40 (1941), 166-229; R. Fuller, *The formation of the resurrection narratives* (New York, London 1971); A. George, 'Les récits d'apparitions aux onze à partir de Luc 24:36-53', *La résurrection du Christ et l'exégèse moderne* (Lectio Divina, 50) (Paris 1969), 75-104 (cited *Lectio Divina,* n. 50); P. Grelot, 'La résurrection de Jésus et son arrière-plan biblique et juif', *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 17-54; and 'L'histoire devant la résurrection du Christ', RHS and RAM 48 (1972), 221-50; H. Grasz, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte* (Göttingen 1964[3])(1956); B. van Iersel, 'The resurrection of Jesus – information or interpretation?', Conc 6 (1970), Vol. 10, 54-67; J. Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Christi* (SBS, 17) (Stuttgart 1967[2]); X. Léon-Dufour, *Résurrection de Jésus et message paschal* (Paris 1971); E. Lohse, *Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi in Zeugnis des Lukasevangeliums* (Neukirchen 1961); see also RSR 57

(1969), 599-602; L. Marin, 'Les femmes au tombeau', *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 39-50, and in C. Cabrol & L. Marin, 'Sémiotique narrative: récits bibliques', *Langages* 6 (1971), 39-50, and 'Du corps au texte', *Esprit* (April 1973), 913-928; W. Marxsen, *Anfangsprobleme der Christologie* (Gütersloh 1960); *Die Auferstehung Jesu als historisches und als theologisches Problem* (Gütersloh 1965²), and *Die Auferstehung von Jesus von Nazaret* (Gütersloh 1968); W. Marxsen, U. Wilckens, D. Delling & H. Geyer, *Die Bedeutung der Auferstehungsbotschaft für den Glauben an Jesus Christus* (Gütersloh 1968⁶); F. Muszner, *Die Auferstehung Jesu* (Munich 1969); F. Neyrinck, 'Les femmes au tombeau. Étude de la rédaction matthéenne', NTS 15 (1968-1969), 168-190; A. Pelletier, 'Les apparitions du Ressuscité en termes de la Septante', Bibl 51 (1970), 76-79; E. Pousset, 'Résurrection de Jésus et message paschal', NRTh 104 (1972), 95-107; B. Rigaux, *Dieu l'a ressuscité* (Gembloux 1973); L. Schenke, *Auferstehungsverkündigung und leeres Grab* (SBS, n. 33) (Stuttgart 1969²); H. Schlier, *Uber die Auferstehung Jesu Christi* (Einsiedeln 1968); J. Schmitt, *Prédication apostolique,* DBS 8 (1967-1968), 251-267; R. Schnackenburg, 'Zur Aussage "Jesus ist (von den Toten) auferstanden" ', BZ 13 (1969), 1-17; Ph.
[331] Seidensticker, *Die Auferstehung in der Botschaft der Evangelisten,* (Stuttgart 1967); G. W. Tropf, 'The first resurrection appearance and the ending of Mark's gospel', NTS 18 (1971-1972), 308-378; A. Vögtle, 'Ekklesiologische Auftragsworte des Auferstanden', *S. Pagina* (Paris-Gembloux 1959), pt. II, 280-294, and 'Das christologische und ekklesiologische Anliegen von Mt. 28:18-20', *Studia Evangelica* II (TU, 87) (Berlin 1964), 266-294; U. Wilckens, 'Der Ursprung der Ueberlieferung der Erscheinungen des Auferstandenen', *Dogma und Denkstrukturen* (Festschrift f. E. Schlink) (Göttingen 1963), 53-95 and *Auferstehung* (Stuttgart-Berlin 1970); Th. J. Weeden, *Mark-traditions,* 101-117; special issue: 'Lire l'écriture; dire la résurrection', *Esprit* 41 (1973), April, no. 4, 831-935.

Jesus' death put an end to the fellowship shared by the earthly Jesus with his disciples − an end reinforced by their leaving him in the lurch. Why, then, did these same disciples announce after a time that their living fellowship with Jesus had been restored and they preached about him as the living Lord, risen from the dead, either presently operative in Christian proclamation or soon to return as the son of man? What took place between Jesus' death and the proclamation by the church?

The New Testament never says that the resurrection itself was the event that triggered it all. In contrast to the apocrypha, especially *Ev. Petri* 35-45, there is no account of the actual resurrection. What led the disciples to proclaim their faith that 'Jesus is back, he is alive' or 'he is risen' was not the resurrection but some sort of gracious self-manifestation of the dead Jesus. How did the early Christian churches themselves interpret their new found faith in the living or

returning crucified Lord? In other words, what happened to them?

Recent exegetical literature has shed more light on this complex matter. We now know that the tradition of Jesus' appearances to the twelve[1] was originally independent of the distinct Jerusalem tradition in which the local Christians – in keeping with the veneration practised in other ancient burial places in Jerusalem – took a pious interest in Jesus' tomb and other sites connected with his passion and death.[2] Since the time when G. Schille, and in the Netherlands B. van Iersel, offered this explanation of the 'sacred tomb' tradition, other scholars have reached a similar conclusion.[3] Christians come to look at and are [332] taken on a conducted tour of various sites in Jerusalem calculated to remind them of Jesus' journey to the cross. The conclusion of this pious pilgrimage is a visit to the holy sepulchre. They come to it already committed to faith in the crucified and risen Lord. Their religious awe reaches a climax when, having arrived at the spot, they hear the guide say: 'And here is the place where they had laid him' (Mk. 16:6c).[4]

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[1] The gospels present the following traditions: (a) *Mt.:* an appearance of Jesus to women as they return from the tomb (28:9-10) and an appearance to the eleven 'on the mountain' in Galilee (28:16-20); (b) *Lk.:* an appearance to the Emmaus disciples (24:13-35) and an appearance to the eleven with others present (24:36-5 3); (c) *Jn.*: an appearance to Mary Magdalene (20:14-18), an appearance to the disciples in the absence of Thomas (20:19-23), an appearance to Thomas with the disciples in the background (20:24-29), finally in the additional closing chapter: Galilean appearance to seven disciples during a fishing trip (Jn. 21); (d) the later Markan ending brings together three appearances from other gospels: to Mary Magdalene (Jn.), to those on the way to Emmaus (Lk.) and to the eleven (Mt.; Lk.: Mk. 16:9-20). Thus the appearance to the eleven (or 'the twelve', 1 Cor. 15:3-5) is a constant factor in all the traditions.

[2] B. van Iersel, l.c., in Conc 6 (1970), n. 10, bases his argument primarily on the typical expression *'hic est locus ubi'*, later (from the fourth century) a technical expression in Christian pilgrim literature. Yet it remains hypothetical whether the expression already had this meaning for Mark (it does not occur, according to van Iersel himself, in classical Greek literature or in rabbinical writings). See also J. Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 123-125.

[3] Furthermore: nowhere in the New Testament do we find the expression 'the empty tomb'. See B. van Iersel, in Conc, l.c.; G. Schille, 'Das Leiden des Herrn', in ZThK 52 (1955), 161-205; J. Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, especially 123-128; L. Schenke, *Auferstehungsverkündigung,* 93-103; and 63-83.

[4] This formula (later, at any rate) is a technical term with 'guides' at the places where martyrs were venerated (Van Iersel, l.c., footnote 2; Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 123-129). Again, the detailed specifications as to time ('on the first day of the week – very early – when the sun had risen', Mk. 16:2) in a text not intended as a historiographical record likewise point to a cultic and liturgical context; see in particular G. Schille, 'Das Leiden des Herrn', l.c. (taken over by J. Delorme and L. Schenke). According to Schille the origin of the passion narrative lies in an (annual) celebration at Jerusalem, with three major elements: (a) an *anamnesis* of the farewell evening; (b) a liturgy of Jesus' passion and death at the hours of Jewish prayer (see Mk. 15:2-41); (c) a liturgy early on Easter morning with a visit (later a solemn procession) to the sacred tomb (see Mk. 15:42 and 16:1-8; Schille, l.c., 182-183). The Easter festival eventually developed out of this (J. Delorme, l.c., 129). Even so, some important commentators trace the tradition of 'the tomb' back to a very early tradition of an actual confirmation that the tomb was empty (thus i.a. L. Cerfaux, J. Jeremias, E. Lohse, J. Hering, J. Weisz, J. Dupont, K. Rengstorf, J. Blank). But these exegetes are defending the *antiquity* of the tomb tradition against a number of interpretations according to which that tradition is said to be very late. The antiquity of this tradition is now more generally accepted than heretofore. The new problem is whether we have a tradition of an 'empty tomb' or a tradition of the 'holy sepulchre' (in other words, a cultic tradition).

Matthew and Luke take great pains to link the two separate traditions − the holy sepulchre and Jesus' appearances to the twelve. John in particular makes it very clear that an 'empty tomb', if there were such a thing, could never be proof of the resurrection (Jn. 20:8-9), but at most a token of an already existing faith in the resurrection.

Mark says nothing about appearances of Jesus, not even to the women, as opposed to Matthew, Luke, John and the much later Markan ending (Mk. 16:9-20). All he reports is a 'young man in white', that is, an angel (see 2 Macc. 3:26, 23; also Mk. 9:3; Rev. 7:9,13), who reminds the women at the holy sepulchre of the apostolic kerygma: 'He has risen' (Mk. 16:6b). Later evangelists mention Jesus' appearances to women as well (their names vary, though Mary Magdalene is invariably present). So there must have been a tradition about Jesus' appearance to women. In contrast to Mark, on the other hand, other evangelists include (male) disciples, especially Peter, in the 'tomb' tradition from Jerusalem (Lk. 24:12; Jn. 20:3-9). All the evidence points to Mk. 16:1-8 as a point of departure for our interpretation. J. Delorme rightly says that the silence of the apostolic kerygma and catechesis regarding the 'holy sepulchre' tradition in no way rules out a local Jerusalem tradition (including the details reported in Mk. 16:1-8). This tradition is not per se secondary, therefore, but apparently very old, although the other gospels associate it 'secondarily' with the tradition of the appearances. Still, the Jerusalem tradition of the 'tomb of Jesus' must be more recent than the tradition of the appearances, but older than the gospel stories about them. The angel's message (Mk. 16:6-7) presupposes an existing belief in the apostolic proclamation in Jerusalem, while this gospel story itself assumes the Christian custom of a Jerusalem pilgrimage to Jesus' tomb. By combining the two originally independent traditions Matthew, Luke and John give the impression that there are two bases for belief in the resurrection: 'the tomb' and the 'appearances', whereas
[333] originally there was no mention of an empty tomb, and the 'holy sepulchre' story presupposes faith in the crucified-and-risen one based on the apostolic testimony itself.

Mark expressly mentions in his narrative that Jesus came with his friends from Galilee to Jerusalem. In their company were women who were related to the 'brothers of Jesus' (Mk. 16:1 and 15:47; cf. 6:3) and apparently − later − enjoyed a certain prestige in the local Christian communities (see Acts 1:14). The Markan narrative reveals no trace of apologetics (an angel, after all, was hardly the most suitable medium for that! Also, it was the *angel* who said that Jesus was not there; nowhere in Mark do we read that the women themselves found the tomb empty. And finally, in those days women were unlikely to have served an apologetic purpose!), but certainly points to a theological concern. An angel by definition has a message to convey; and the message of

this angel from God is not an empty tomb but 'He has risen!'. From the evidence as a whole it is clear that certain women, likewise 'disciples of Jesus', did play some historical role in the Christ-confessing community.[5] Following J. Delorme and U. Wilckens[6] one could say that a particular marginal tradition in Jerusalem assumed theological significance in light of the apostolic faith based on the officially acknowledged appearance of Jesus to Peter and the eleven. The greatest import of the stories centred on the holy sepulchre lies in the unmistakable Christian emphasis on the absolute identity between the crucified Jesus of Nazareth and the risen Christ. In the Markan account that is the really perplexing thing, the *Jesus mystery*. At the end of the day, the New Testament sees the tomb as a 'negative' sign of the new creation in this world, brought about by the eschatological saving reality of Jesus' resurrection from the dead: 'Death shall be no more' (Rev. 21:4-5). The negative blueprint of the tomb is a profoundly human archetypal symbol of that. The other evangelists eagerly incorporated a Jerusalem local pilgrimage tradition into their apostolic kerygma regarding this eschatological newness. Ultimately this is their real focus, not the tomb traditions. However, because 'holy sepulchre' and 'appearances of Christ' are fused in the literary accounts in the gospel narratives and the accounts of the latter presuppose the former, I have to start by examining the traditions about the tomb in Jerusalem, bearing in mind that they are more recent than those of the appearances, which originally were associated only with one particular local community's tradition. More than that: tradition history shows that the resurrection kerygma was already present [334] even before the origin of traditions about the tomb and appearances, albeit not independently of what the appearances signified (the paschal experience of life renewed by Jesus).

§1 Traditions centred on the Jerusalem site of the holy sepulchre

A. MK. 16:1-8: APOSTOLIC RESURRECTION KERYGMA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 'HOLY SEPULCHRE'

This final pericope of the original Markan gospel is based on a pre-Markan tradition. Critical exegetes tell us that this tradition was originally independent of the conclusion of the passion narrative (Mk. 15:42-47); it is said to consist of

[5] See Acts 1:14; Mk. 15:40-41; Jn. 21:24; Lk. 1:1-4; Lk. 2:19; 2:51; 8:1-3; 10:38-42; 24:10. Th. Boman, *Die Jesusüberlieferung,* 123-137, even feels compelled to recognize an explicit 'women tradition' in many passages of the Lukan gospel (and actually identifies this with the peculiarly Lukan source). It is indeed noticeable that in the pro-feminist Luke (is this simply Hellenistic?) the feminine viewpoint (especially in the infancy narrative as contrasted with Matthew's) is very marked.

[6] U. Wilckens, in W. Marxsen et al., *Die Bedeutung der Auferstehungs-botschaft,* 48, 61; Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 123-145.

16:2; 16:5-6 and 16:8a.[7] Yet one may well wonder whether this latter piece of tradition was not in fact what gave rise to the pre-Markan tradition of Mk. 15:42-47, the tenor of which suggests only too clearly that it was based on a resurrection belief (and thus *with a view to* 16:2; 16:5, 6, 8a). Given this correction, L. Schenke's other arguments strike me as cogent: (a) 16:1 is Markan redaction; (b) Mk. 16:7, and therefore 16:8b, are Markan redaction, so that the sequence in this piece of tradition was: 'You seek Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. Look, this is the place where they laid him. The women went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had come upon them.' That makes the Markan interpolation, 'And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid' (16:8b), consistent with the other Markan insertion, 16:7: 'But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you' (see Mk. 14:28, which is also Markan redaction).[8]

Since the commanding feature of the story is the angel's message (there is actually no mention of an 'appearance': he does not arrive or leave; he is 'sitting there'), the style of an 'angelophany' (model of an angelic manifestation) informs the reader that the apostolic faith in the crucified-and-
[335] risen one is a divine revelation to the church. The narrative patently presupposes Christian belief in the resurrection. The distinctive thing about this pericope, however, is that in the early church in Jerusalem this apostolic belief was also associated with Christians' visiting the holy sepulchre, where a religious ceremony took place and apropos this early morning visit the pilgrims were reminded of the apostolic belief in the resurrection. The pericope points to a practice of venerating the tomb of Jesus in Jerusalem. Whether this custom is connected historically with a visit by some women to the tomb after Jesus' death can no longer be ascertained, although there is certainly a tradition connecting Jesus' tomb with some women, at all events with Mary Magdalene. Mark emphasizes that a number of women were witnesses, not so much to Jesus' burial and the details of that event as to the site of the tomb (Mk. 15:47; in other words, the Jerusalem church knew where they had laid him). Nowhere in this pericope does an empty tomb lead to the inference that Jesus

[7] L. Schenke, *Auferstehungsrerkündigung,* 20-29; Weeden, *Mark-traditions,* 101-117 (himself referring otherwise to L. Schenke).

[8] It looks as though according to Mark the disciples did *not* go to Galilee and that Mark is criticizing this very fact (Schenke, *Auferstehungsverkündigung,* 49-52, n. 71). According to Delorme, on the other hand (in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 131), Mk. 16:7 has been added to link the local Jerusalem tradition with the appearances to the twelve (in Matthew and Luke this is clear, in any case). But in Part Three (second sub-strand of the *maranatha* Christology) it will emerge that it is anything but certain that Mark is referring to appearances and not to the parousia. Mark does, of course, see the flight of the women (16:8) as parallel with that of the disciples (14:50; see 14:41), that is, the failure of them all to comprehend the Jesus mystery (see 8:22; 9:10,32). The resurrection is not something thought up by men, but the amazing activity of God.

had been resurrected − the other way round, in fact: 'He has risen, he is not here' (Mk. 16:6b). The tradition of tomb veneration in Jerusalem is linked with the apostolic belief in the resurrection. But hearing a Christian sermon on the subject during a visit to Jesus' tomb has a special religious atmosphere that can only be experienced in situ. What is important is the explicit reference to the risen crucified one, further emphasized by the epithet 'the Nazarene' after Jesus' name. The term often has painful overtones:[9] in effect, the Nazarene means 'the executed one'.[10] Both Acts 4:10 and Mark 16:6 speak of the Nazarene in a context that contrasts 'cross' with 'resurrection'.[11] Thus the message of the angel clearly refers to the resurrection of the crucified one. As proclaimed in Jerusalem, particularly at the holy sepulchre, the kerygma of the resurrection was bound to evoke the belief in God's restoration of the crucified Nazarene.[12] The Easter message comes 'from God', it is a divine revelation; that is the point of the presence of an angel, a messenger from God, in a story. 'He has been raised' (the perfect passive is deliberate): the resurrection is God's saving act in Jesus. The crucified man is the risen one, the risen one is he who was crucified: that is God's revelation, not something contrived by men. For a Jewish Christian the place where God speaks and reveals himself is Holy Scripture. Hence in the apostolic creed: 'He was raised ... in accordance with the Scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:4). The angel says nothing that the Christian community didn't know already. The community itself, in virtue of God's revealing grace, articulates its faith in the crucified and risen one; and in Jerusalem it does so in a special context: 'at the place where they had laid him'. This tomb of Jesus has become the chief symbol, the 'memorial' of the crucified-and-risen one. The believer is directed away from the tomb to listen [336] to the resurrection kerygma. In that respect the first Christians were truly Jewish: throughout the Old Testament and in Judaism divine revelations are bound up with sanctuaries or holy places.[13] Mk. 16:1-8 suggests that the resurrection is a mystery of faith, of which this holy place is the negative symbol. In Jerusalem − elsewhere it is not possible − the holy sepulchre is indeed a religious symbol of Christian belief in the resurrection. It is not an apologia: the tomb is the place where Christians come to profess their belief in the resurrection. Beyond Jerusalem, and therefore in the official Christian proclamation, the story of the holy sepulchre has no function whatever − which is why neither creed nor kerygma mentions the empty tomb. Mark 16:7 is the first sign of a tradition seeking to combine the two traditional strands −

[9] Mk. 1:24 par. Lk.; Mk. 14:67 par. Mt.; Acts 6:14, see also Acts 22:8; 26:9; 24:5 and Mt. 2:23.
[10] According to Jn. 19:19 the inscription 'Jesus the Nazarene' also was written on the cross; for Jews in particular Jesus is 'the Nazarene' (Acts 2:23-24,26).
[11] Also in the so-called Petrine speeches or sermons: Acts 2:23-24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40.
[12] J. Delorme, Lectio Divina, n. 50, 120-121; Schenke, l.c., 75.
[13] J. Jeremias, *Heiligengräber in Jesu Umwelt* (Göttingen 1958); on popular pilgrimages: 138-143.

the universal belief in the risen (but coming) son of man and the Jerusalem tradition of Jesus' tomb.[14]

That the vital context of the resurrection narrative in Mark is a tomb where a liturgical service is conducted has profound human implications. The original story about the women going to Jesus' tomb on Easter morning is an aetiological cultic legend to explain the (at least) annual visit of the Jerusalem church to the tomb in order to honour the risen one and listen to the tale still recognizable in the pre-Markan tradition underlying Mk. 16:1-8. A cultic celebration at a place of pilgrimage invariably antedates the aetiology − often history cannot even tell us why men first made their way to a particular place. Structural analysis and semeiotics have done a lot to help modern people grasp the at first sight disconcerting fact of an 'empty tomb' in an already given context of resurrection. The analysis shows that the resurrection kerygma is presupposed in references to the tomb; it is not directly connected with a Jewish anthropological notion, according to which resurrection is considered a kind of 're-animation of a body' (as in the story of Lazarus). That is quite different from the eschatological character of Jesus' physical resurrection. It concerns the human symbolism of the sepulchre, pregnant sign and living symbol of death, the place where a person's absence is most clearly felt, because it is 'a place of death'. A grave is not the dwelling place of a living person! In the Jerusalem story this place is suddenly ringing with a message from God: 'He is alive! He has been raised!' The tomb is filled by the (dazzling)
[337] white raiment of the young man, which rivets all attention on itself and not on whatever else may or may not be present: the place of death becomes the place of divine revelation. The white apparition annuls, as it were, the presence of what the women had come to look for: a corpse to be embalmed.[15] The angel is there to be listened to. Because Jesus is alive, he is not to be sought in a sepulchre, the place of death! At no point is the story concerned with a corpse (whether there is or is not one, unless it be in the minds of women who were seeking not a living but a dead person). That was their fundamental mistake, as Lk. 24:5 puts it: 'One does not seek the living among the dead.' On the women's arrival the sealed off sacred place of death, the tomb, turns out to be open already: the stone has been rolled away. It desecrates the sacredness of death − and at a moment when the holy Jewish sabbath is drawing to a close and the sun is about to rise, the start of the first profane weekday and workday

[14] The fact that in Mk. 16:8 the women *say nothing* about what has taken place is variously explained by the commentators in accordance with their overall interpretation of Mark, and depending especially on their interpretation of Mk. 16:7b as relating either to the parousia or the Galilean appearances.

[15] L. Marin, 'Les femmes au tombeau', in C. Cabrol and L. Marin, *Sémiotique narrative: récits bibliques,* in *Langages* 6 (1971) (39-50), 44, and 'Du corps au texte', in *Esprit* (April 1973), 913-928; J. Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 105-151.

(Mk. 16:1-2). Darkness is becoming light. Even before the women enter the tomb the narrative itself has initiated the reader into the mystery: a new age has dawned. When Mark related this Jerusalem story the 'first day after the sabbath' had long been the Christian Sunday. The radical transition from old to new permeates the whole story, poised in expectation of the fast approaching parousia. Corresponding to the 'opened' sacred area of the sepulchre is the emptiness of the grave. The closed space of death has made way for the openness of resurrection; in contrast to death, resurrection is open, not morbidly sacred. The enclosed sacred area is as it were 'profaned' by the stone that has been rolled away, the empty space is the obverse of the new plenitude: he has risen! Because this positive news is so difficult to express in words, the emptiness of the tomb speaks volumes. That is the profoundly anthropological intention of this Markan tradition. It makes the ineffable – a crucified one come to life – utterable and accessible to all; one does not need to be a philosopher or theologian to believe in the resurrection (or reject it). The gospels decline to tell us about the resurrection itself; thus it is articulated in terms of experience and language as a story which can be heard and heeded as a message.

B. MT. 28:1-10: THE MARKAN ACCOUNT TRANSPOSED TO A POLEMICAL CONTEXT [338]

Matthew adduces no new traditions pertaining to the Jerusalem story or the Markan version of it familiar to him (on this point). But he refashions the serene presence of the angel (in the Markan story) into a grand apocalyptic angelophany; and for him the tomb becomes a controversy between Jews and Christians. This turns it into a very different story.

At first Jesus' burial place was guarded by soldiers (Mt. 27:62-66); and later − after they had just missed the event of the resurrection − they were bribed by the Jewish authorities to spread the rumour that Jesus' disciples had stolen the body (28:11-15). Matthew set the scene like that because his readers had already been told that Jesus had foretold: 'After three days I will rise again' (Mt. 26:32 and 28:6); thus the official guard was set over the tomb for exactly three days (27:63-64) and the tomb itself was sealed off and made doubly secure (27:65-66). Seen thus, the purpose of the Matthean story is not to give historical information; it echoes the controversy that arose between Jews and Christians regarding the 'empty tomb', a debate in which both sides apparently proceeded from the premise that the tomb was empty (28:15; see Jn. 20:15);[16] all they disagree about is how to interpret that fact. Matthew's aim is

[16] H. von Campenhausen, *Der Ablauf der Osterereignisse und das leere Grab,* 50-51; J. Kremer, *Die Osterbotschaft der vier Evangelien* (Stuttgart 1968²), 28-31; F.Muszner, *Die Auferstehung Jesu* (Munich 1969), 128-133; H. Grasz, *Ostergeschehe und Osterberichte,* 23-32.

to counter the denial of the Christian message in a theologically less interesting polemic which had grown up around an empty tomb; a polemic based on the Jewish anthropological principle that for a resurrection to have happened the body must have disappeared.[17]

In contrast to Mark, Matthew makes a great deal of the sacred aspects of a dazzling angelic manifestation. Whereas Mark only implies that the man seated in the tomb was an angel, Matthew speaks more directly of 'an angel of the Lord' (28:2), whose 'appearance was like lightning' (28:3), while 'for fear of him the guards trembled' and were paralysed (28:4). The angel is indeed manifested − to the accompaniment of a thunderous earthquake − and it is he who rolls away the stone. The rest of the story is substantially the same, but with small changes of detail which show that the sepulchre has assumed a different meaning: an empty tomb with an apologetic function. 'He is not here' [339] is now pointedly placed before 'he has risen' (28:6), although it does not say that the body is no longer there (that is probably taken for granted). Moreover, the angel does not bring a revelation from God; he refers to what Jesus himself had predicted prior to his death: his rising again (28:6a with 26:32). The women are instructed to go and tell the disciples: 'He has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him' (28:7). (Matthew couched it in the form of address that the women used in speaking to the disciples.)

What is new in Matthew, as opposed to Mark, is the subsequent appearance of Jesus himself to the women on their way back to the disciples. Thus the manifestation of the angel was just a preliminary to that of Jesus, which is in turn secondary to the 'official' appearance of Jesus to the eleven; in other words the apostolic kerygma is given an exclusive emphasis. The substance of Jesus' manifestation consists in an element of *grace* (Jesus takes the initiative and meets them) and one of *recognition:* 'They came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him' (28:9), that is, they recognized Jesus as the Christ and as Lord. The message about going to Galilee is put into the mouth of the manifested Jesus himself (28:10). As the Johannine gospel is an independent literary document but also contains a manifestation of Christ to Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:11-18), one cannot assert that Mt. 28:9-10 is pure redaction, without any tradition behind it. Traditions must have existed in Jerusalem regarding not only the holy sepulchre but also a manifestation of Jesus to women.[18] Matthew, too, makes it clear that the appearances and the quality of the witnesses − the eleven – provided the basis for the Christian faith, and not

[17] An eschatological, bodily resurrection, theologically speaking, has nothing to do, however, with a corpse.

[18] F. Neyrinck, 'Les femmes au tombeau, Etude de la rédaction matthéenne', in NTS 15 (1968-1969), 168-190.

an empty tomb, which nevertheless had already begun to fulfil an apologetic function in it. The Matthean gospel would seem to be a sustained attempt to combine the local Jerusalem traditions with the apostolic kerygma, based on the tradition of Jesus' appearance to the eleven, which the canonical gospels treat as the only one of real importance to the church (this being the ultimate standpoint of the gospels themselves); in that context, however, the Jerusalem traditions have their rightful place. The church officially affirmed Jesus' resurrection − according to Matthew predicted by himself − on the grounds of his appearance to the eleven.

To this the Johannine gospel really adds no new information (as regards the non-official manifestations): the local Jerusalem tradition is conjoined with the official tradition of the appearances to 'the brethren'.

C. LK. 24:1-12: THE MARKAN NARRATIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE (JUDAEO-) GREEK 'RAPTURE' MODEL [340]

Despite the absence of any direct literary dependence in Luke and John their 'appearance' stories nevertheless display similar features, pointing to a common (Hellenistic) Jewish tradition.[19] This 'Hellenism' is especially noticeable in Luke.

To my mind recent exegetical studies confirm beyond a doubt that the Lukan motif of the Jesus tomb acquires a completely new context compared with Mark and Matthew.[20] The distinctive feature of the Lukan motif is that, in contrast to Mk. 16:6 and Mt. 28:6, in Luke it is the women themselves who ascertain that the tomb is empty (Lk. 24:3). And then, logically enough in a thesis affirming that the tomb is empty, Luke has Peter 'officially' corroborate the fact (Lk. 24:12 and 24:3).[21] This has absolutely no apologetic function (as is often argued) but follows essentially from the 'rapture' model employed by Luke. For the failure to find a person or, after his death, his corpse, is typical of that model. If absolutely nothing can be found of an individual (always a pious miracle worker or sage), then he has been 'taken up to God' − snatched away. There are plenty of examples in ancient literature.[22]

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[19] A. George, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 75-104.

[20] Especially G. Friedrich, 'Lukas 9:51 und die Entrückungs-Christologie des Lukas', in *Orientierung an Jesus,* l.c., 48-77, and 'Die Auferweckung Jesu, eine Tat Gottes oder ein Interpretament der Jünger?', in KuD 17 (1971), 170-179; G. Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu* (Munich 1971); G. Strecker, 'Entrückung', in RAC, V, 461-476.

[21] This is Lukan editorializing: G. Schneider, *Die Passion Jesu nach den drei älteren Evangelien* (Munich 1973), 151-153.

[22] A 'translation' or 'rapture', sudden removal (to be distinguished from, in particular, the ancient, classical Greek 'journey of a soul' in celestial spheres) (Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt,* 34ff) was known from of old in Egypt, Babylonia, in the Greek and Roman world, among the Jews of earlier times and the Judaic period. The two classic instances in the Old Testament itself are those of Enoch and Elijah.

Although 'empty tomb' and 'taken up to God' are identical in this model, this in no way implies that, having established the fact of an empty tomb, one can immediately conclude that the occupant has been snatched away − to God. On the contrary, at first there is fear and astonishment as one begins to suspect the presence of the sacred. Peter, too, who formally pronounced the tomb empty, went away 'amazed and wondering about what had happened' (Lk. 24:12). The empty tomb, together with the previous activity of the person in question, determined whether or not he had been 'taken up'. Belief in the rapture, therefore, would be confined to disciples or intimate friends who had been the daily companions of the person (before his death and before his sudden removal); as a rule they were also afforded manifestations of the person.

Luke simply takes over the motif of the tomb from the Jerusalem tradition (Markan account), but for the benefit of Greek readers he gives it a very different function. For him the rapture model is the appropriate means to make the Christian message of resurrection from the dead intelligible to Greeks –
[341] which is what he has in view (see Lk. 24:6-7, where he juxtaposes the two terms). In both the Lukan gospel and in Acts this Greco-Roman and Hellenistic-Jewish device is used in many places. Indeed, at first Paul, too, envisages the living being 'caught up' at the parousia of Christ (1 Thess. 4:17).[23]

Thus a rapture may be corroborated by the fact of an empty tomb, but also and principally by manifestations of the person 'snatched away' (or of someone representing him). In the rapture theory 'empty tomb' and 'manifestation' go hand in hand: those snatched away are removed from 'the world of men' *(ex anthrôpôn)*[24] and raised up to God or the gods; they are divinized (the individual in question is a *divus* and is worshipped), but thenceforth they may appear to former companions or disciples. When Chaireas went to the tomb the day after his wife Callirhoë had been buried to pay his last respects and place wreaths at her grave, the stone was already rolled away. On seeing the empty tomb he took fright but did not dare go inside. Afterwards, when the tomb was examined, they found nothing.[25] The typically Lukan story of the travellers on the road to Emmaus is likewise

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See Gen. 5:24; 2 Kings 2:9-11; 1 Macc. 2:5 8; Ps. 49:16. Also Deut. 34:5-6, where it says that nobody knows 'the grave of Moses'. See Hebr. 11:5; Rev. 11:12; even 1 Thess. 1:9-10. The technical terms for 'rapture' are: *aphanismos, harpagè, metastasis,* in Hebrew *laqach;* in the Septuagint: *metatithèmi* (Gen. 5:24) or *analambanein* (2 Kings 2:9-10).

[23] The rapture can occur before as well as after death. That is why Br. O. McDermott's argument is not to the point *(The personal unity of Jesus and God according to W. Pannenberg,* St. Ottilien 1973, 259).

[24] Note the essential difference in expression between the New Testament terminology 'ex tôn nekrôn' (removed from the *dead)* and the rapture-terminology 'ex tôn anthrôpôn': radically removed from our *world of human beings,* so that not even a corpse is left; thus: pertaining completely to the divine sphere *(theios anèr* theory; see Part Three).

[25] Chariton, *De Chaerea et Callirhoë,* III – a widely disseminated ancient novel, cited by Friedrich, in KuD, 177; Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt,* 47.

couched in 'rapture' terminology: *aphantos egeneto* (Lk. 24:31); there are no details about a resurrection, but the account as a whole is reminiscent of the rapture model.[26]

Some accounts of raptures antedate the gospels; others − reporting cases analogous even in detail − are more recent than the Lukan story. But one could hardly argue that these somewhat later pagan accounts derive from Luke's gospel. In other words, it is not a matter of literary indebtedness, but has to do with the fact that − like, for instance, Philostratus − Luke was drawing on the same arsenal of ideas, mythical and legendary, generated by popular piety and widely current at the time, although with very different purposes in view. So the real point of Luke's narrative cannot be explained by diachronously juxtaposing similar stories (clear evidence of a single model),[27] but only through synchronous, structural analysis, which must clarify how the empty tomb and the appearances function in the Lukan narrative.

Part of the classical rapture model is that when a manifesting subject bids farewell he pronounces a blessing or leaves something as a parting gift.[28] Thus in Lk. 24:50-53 the 'adoration (on bended knee)' is another element of the rapture theory (Lk. 24:52).[29]

The definitive significance of Jesus as son of God had long been accepted in [342]
the Christian tradition; but in order to get his Christian message across to Greeks Luke clothes it in concepts that would be accessible and intelligible to them. Obviously the standard model is not the basis of the Christian interpretation of Jesus; but for his missionary purpose the historically earlier interpretation is expressed in terms which, whilst deriving from the *theios anèr* theory, are manifestly Luke's way of presenting it plausibly. Just as after the event the disciples 'return to the city with great joy' (Lk. 24:52), so Plutarch tells how the two Roman disciples, after Romulus's appearance following his rapture, make their way 'to the city with great joy'.[30] That this rapture model is a dominant feature in the Lukan documents is confirmed in a singular way by the otherwise unintelligible argument in Acts 2:25-26. For the benefit of his

[26] The fact that the party on the way to Emmaus recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread signifies; Jesus, who was himself *the guest* of his two hosts, nevertheless acts as the host himself: he breaks the bread in the home of strangers. That is: he once more affords the disciples fellowship with him (see Part Two, Section One).

[27] Cicero, Livy and Plutarch still use the model themselves, at the same time revealing that they no longer believe in what popular credulity still takes as being 'real'. In other words, for them a break, a process of demythologizing, has already taken place: they are conscious of the distinction between what is really intended (namely that Romulus be venerated as the Quirinus-god of Rome) and the model (empty tomb, appearances). See Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt,* 49-50.

[28] Slavonic Enoch 64:4; 57:2; Gen. 27:4; Tob. 10:11; Jubilees 22:10ff; 2 Kings 2:9 (Elijah).

[29] As opposed to Mark and Matthew, Luke avoids the term *'proskynesis'* (prostrate adoration) as worship of the earthly Jesus; he reserves this term for the risen Jesus, taken up to God and now (after a series of appearances) definitively removed from the scene (Lk. 24, 52).

[30] Friedrich, in *Orientierung an Jesus,* l.c., 61.

Greek readers Luke underscores three facts. This pericope points out that David's burial place is still known in Jerusalem: 'I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day' (Acts 2:29), that is, David was not 'snatched away'. Thus the quotation from the psalm cannot allude to David; the reference is to Jesus, the Christ. That is the gist of Luke's argument. Jesus' resurrection and his sitting at God's right hand are explicitly contrasted with David's tombstone. Likewise Acts 3:19-21, although incorporating a very old tradition, is typically recent, that is, Lukan, in that it links a very ancient tradition with the rapture model: 'Heaven must receive him until the time of the restoration of all things.' The notion of the subject 'being kept with God', in expectation of his eschatological role, is a typical rapture motif.[31] Using the same model, Luke describes Jesus' ascension in Acts 1:1-11 in terms of all the elements of the rapture motifs familiar to Greeks and Hellenistic Jews (cloud; mountain; instruction and exhortation; promise); here Elijah's rapture serves as the model (Acts 1:8 and 2 Kings 2:7-10). Hence Acts 1:1-11 is not a doublet of Lk. 24:51. The end of the Lukan gospel and the beginning of Acts are meant to link Acts 1:2 with Lk. 24:51, but at the same time to differentiate sharply between the two texts. The Lukan gospel tells us about Jesus' life, from birth to departure; Acts records and relates the missionary activity of the church between the resurrection and
[343] the parousia, for the proximity of the end is rejected (Acts 1:6); Jesus has gone, but now the Spirit continues his work (Acts 1:7 and 1:11). Jesus' disciples are not left as orphans; they are baptized 'with the Spirit' (Acts 1:5; see 1:8). In order to mark this break between earthly fellowship with Jesus and fellowship with the exalted Christ, Luke interpolates the account (using terms not found elsewhere in the gospels) of the ascension (Acts 1), employing the same rapture motifs as those he used in his gospel for the parting scene (Lk. 24). Luke 24 rounds off Jesus' earthly ministry; Acts 1 is the beginning of his heavenly ministry through the Spirit.

By the same token it is only Luke who has the 'appearances during forty days' (Acts 1:3). This interval is a later element of the rapture schema.[32] In the apocrypha the period varies in length. The most conspicuous parallel (more or less from Luke's own time) is a Jewish apocalypse in which Ezra, after having (like Moses) instructed his people (Ex. 24:18), appeared over forty days to

[31] Sir. (Eccles.) 48:9; 4 Ezra 6:26; Syr. Apoc. Baruch 13:3; 25:1; 76:2; 'you (Ezra) will be snatched away from men and will thenceforth sojourn with my son and companions, until the times are at an end' (4 Ezra, 14:9). See F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 184-186; Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt,* 224, also 'Christologie und Geschichtsbild in Apg. 3:19-21', in BZ 13 (1969) (223-241), 231-239; G. Haufe, 'Entrückung und eschatologische Funktion im Spätjudentum', in ZRGG 13 (1961), 105-113; U. Müller, *Messias und Menschensohn in jüdischen Apokalypsen und in der Offenbarung des Johannes* (Gütersloh 1972), 150-154. See below Part III, Section Two, note 41.

[32] Syr. Apoc. Baruch 76:4; 4 Ezra 12 (14):23,36,42,44,45.

commit the lost law to writing once more (4 Ezra 12 [14]:23, 36, 42, 49). After his death Baruch, too, instructs his people for forty days; then he is 'taken up' for good (Syr. Ap. Baruch 76:2-4). The forty-day period after Easter, therefore, is based on a standard model. A rapture always entails a missionary message. The *Imperator,* Caesar, is the *Kyrios* of the world, say the Romans in the Romulus rapture story − Romulus himself conveys that message to Proclus. Lukan Christians, using the same model, say 'No! That Lord is Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, who has been taken up to God.' These parallels should hearten rather than disconcert us. The models are not a starting point for a mythological interpretation of Jesus; but with the help of familiar models Luke is contrasting Jesus, already acknowledged elsewhere as actualized salvation, with the emperor. It is the same as when modern Christians speak of Jesus in terms of existential or socio-critical models, as for instance the 'man for others', the militant activist, et cetera. The only requirement is to maintain a critical distinction between the substance of our faith and those ancient cultural categories. The fact that Luke was consciously using a model is evident when, in his summary of the faith in Acts 10:40ff and 13:30ff, he no longer speaks of a rapture but only of Jesus' death and resurrection; he is critical of the model.

Thus Luke uses the motif of the tomb in a very different perspective from Mark and Matthew; like them he presupposes the resurrection, but the [344] 'rapture' motif facilitates communicating the Christian conception to a Greek audience. Even more than the other evangelists he stresses the 'official' appearances to the twelve.

D. RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND ESCHATOLOGICAL RELIGIOUS TERMINOLOGY

In contrast to Mark, both Matthew (28:9-10) and John (20:11-18) have Jesus appear personally to women as well, whereas the apostolic preaching (1 Cor. 15:3-8) makes no mention of these appearances. Even so, diverse traditions tell us that Jesus' very first appearance was to Mary Magdalene. This merely confirms the existence of a very old tradition, whose historicity cannot be determined at this stage. Biblical anthropology establishes a close relation between women's duties and death: weeping and mourning, anointing the body, caring for and visiting the spot where the person is buried are tasks entrusted to women. Historically it would seem that women were the first to spread the report that Jesus was alive, had risen. The gospels recount that Jesus also had female disciples who − naturally, in view of women's social and cultural status at the time − had different functions and responsibilities from male disciples. They had accompanied Jesus and the others from Galilee to Jerusalem. They stood close to the cross on which Jesus died (Lk. 23:49). One of

them was Mary of Magdala, a small town on the west bank of the sea of Galilee, near the gay and frivolous capital city of Tiberias where Herod Antipas had his residence. Jesus apparently liberated this young woman and restored her to herself: she broke with her past. But initially his death seemed to threaten her new life, until she received the loving assurance that this life regained was stronger than death. This Jesus lived.

The assertion that the apostolic preaching deliberately omits the incident involving Mary of Magdala (see 1 Cor. 15:30) is historically untenable: it derives from a different tradition, initially not known to every local congregation, which the gospels (Matthew; John) respected and incorporated into their report of 'official' appearances. These accounts in the gospels presuppose an already hierarchical church: only the twelve, the leaders of the
[345] early Christian communities, are credited with valid, 'official' appearances: the women and the men on the road to Emmaus were 'not credible' until official apostolic testimony was provided; they were also given the secondary instruction to inform the twelve of the event. This is certainly not indicative of an anti-feminist attitude, as P. Schutz maintains,[33] but of the church's self-understanding that its belief is based on apostolic (at that time indeed exclusively male) testimony. But other, as it were, 'lay' experiences in the church are assigned their rightful place in the gospels and are in no way passed over in the New Testament. On the contrary, the experiences of these women were instrumental in launching the whole Jesus movement. The manner in which the Johannine gospel reports this sheds light on the structure of the experiences denoted by the New Testament term 'Jesus appearances'. At first Mary thinks that they have 'taken away' Jesus' body (Jn. 20:11-15). Her recognition of the 'gardener' as Jesus is auditory, not visual; Jesus says 'Mary', and she replies 'Rabboni'. Structuralists call this a 'fatic code', as when somebody picks up the telephone and says 'Hello!'; its only function is to initiate the conversation. Besides, in the gospels *rabboni* as a form of address is confined to intimate disciples. In other words, spiritual contact with Jesus, severed by his death, is restored: they can once more address each other in familiar terms, death notwithstanding. Death has not shattered living communication with Jesus: that is, after his death he continues to offer his intimates living fellowship. *In* this fellowship believers experience Jesus as brought back from the dead, that is, as one who lives or the risen one. After his death communication with him continues, in a very personal sense. Mary Magdalene may have played a part we do not know about in convincing the disciples that the new orientation which Jesus had brought about in their lives was not rendered meaningless by his death – in fact, the very opposite. In these

[33] P. Schutz, 'Jesus liebte auch die Frauen', in *Die Zeit,* n. 17, 20 April 1973.

accounts of 'private' appearances − very intimate, personal religious experiences − the church recognizes its own experience.[34] At a particular moment these people were jolted, they had an intuition that reoriented their lives. In experiencing this radical, definitive 'conversion' they apprehend Jesus as the living Lord. A specific existential experience is expressed in eschatological language.[35] Unless anchored in such an original experience [346] ('disclosure') eschatological language is up in the air; instead of a real, 'objective' experience here and now it becomes objectivized and abstract without any impact or truth-value. Belief in the resurrection can never just rest on claims of authority; it presupposes a religious experience of a totally new life, which aptly affirms a *reality* (not just a subjective conviction), an experience in which the whole church − people and leaders − recognizes its own kerygma, and which is in turn corroborated by the faith of the church. The church's proclamation of the resurrection is a gracious invitation and sovereign appeal to experience it personally in our own lives, in different ways: differently by those on the road to Emmaus, differently by Mary Magdalene, differently by Peter and the eleven. The way we come to believe in the crucified-and-risen one long after Jesus' death is not all that different from the way in which Jesus' disciples arrived at the same faith. It's just that we suffer from the crude, naive realism of what 'appearances of Jesus' became in the later tradition through ignorance of the distinctively Jewish biblical idiom. But more of that below.

§2 The official apostolic tradition: 'We believe that God raised him from the dead' (1 Thess. 1:10)

A. 'JESUS MADE HIMSELF SEEN' (l COR. 15:3-8)

(a) A unifying formula

The earliest testimonies to Jesus' death and resurrection are in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians: 'We believe that Jesus died and rose again' (1 Thess. 4:14), and: '(We are waiting) for his Son whom he raised from the dead, Jesus ...' (1 Thess. 1:10). Here Paul is citing, in quotation marks (Greek *hoti*; I believe *that*), the already traditional kerygma of the church: Jesus' resurrection from the dead is God's saving act, an event that will bring deliverance: 'his Son, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come' (1

[34] J. Schmitt, 'La resurrection de Jesus; des formules kérygmatiques aux récits évangéliques', in *Parole de Dieu et sacerdoce* (Mélanges Mgr. Weber) (Paris 1962), 93-105; E. Poussct, 'La résurrection', in NRTh 91 (1969) (1009-1044), 1020-1021.

[35] G. Wagner, *La résurrection, signe du monde nouveau* (Paris 1970), 79-86; J. Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 72, 158.

Thess. 1:10). There is no mention of Jesus appearances; everything centres on
[347] his imminent parousia ('We are waiting for his Son ... who delivers us from the judgment to come').

In a different context, in which Paul takes the religious identity of the Christian churches as the premise of a theological argument, the tradition of Christian belief in the resurrection is conjoined with that of Jesus appearances − actually, with a list of four key elements: (a) he died (*apethanen*); (b) he was buried (*etaphè*); (c) he has been raised (*egègertai*); (d) he has shown himself (*ôphthè:* 1 Cor. 15:3-5). Although the appearances of Jesus are not one of the elements of the Christian kerygma and creed, Paul (or even before him, the confessional or catechetic document he is citing) associates the initiative of what is meant by appearances with the fundamental saving event of Jesus himself.

'He was dead and buried': this serves to underline not only Jesus' actual death but in all probability his final rejection as well.[36] After all, the fact that a Christian sympathizer in the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea, is said to have taken it upon himself to give Jesus a proper burial according to Jewish custom is difficult to place historically; it may be a Christian legend − also known elsewhere, in Qumrân − circulated by pious Christians unable to bear the idea of Jesus being buried dishonourably.[37] Luke draws on a different tradition: the same people who had Jesus put to death 'took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb' (Acts 13:27-29).[38] Thus Jesus' entombment is the seal, as it were, set on his rejection. In contrast to that final rejection by men there now stands God's saving act: God raised him up, and the risen one has shown himself. This tallies with the – very early − contrast scheme: 'You killed him, but God raised him up' (see above).

Jesus 'showed himself' or appeared (*ôphthè* is the technical term for this 'paschal event') both in this pre-Pauline tradition and in Luke: Acts 9:17; 13:30-31; Lk. 24:34 (three times, in Luke), and once (though repeated in a similar context four times) in 1 Cor. 15:3-9.[39] The four instances mentioned in 1 Cor. 15

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[36] See U. Wilckens, *Missionsreden,* 135.

[37] J. Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 118, n. 40.

[38] This in itself does not necessarily run counter to the other tradition; Joseph of Arimathea was after all a member of the Sanhedrin. But the gospels differ regarding him: for Mark he is 'a respected member of the Sanhedrin' and 'living in expectation of the kingdom of God' (15:43); in Matthew he is already 'a disciple' (27:57); for Luke a Hellenized and goodly fellow (Lk. 23:50); for John a 'secret disciple' (Jn. 19:38), hardly distinguishable from the Nicodemus figure (Jn. 3:2).

[39] Lk. 24:34; Acts 13:31; 9:17; 26:16; 1 Tim. 3:16 and four times in 1 Cor. 15:5-8. It is remarkable, too, that only in this pre-Pauline passage does Paul use the word in association with 'appearances'. The term comes from the Hebrew (niphal form of *ra'ah),* meaning 'he showed himself (let himself be seen)' as well as 'he is seen'. See L. Koehler-W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in V.T. libros* (Leyden 1958), 865; H. Grasz, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte,* 186-189 (the word *'ôphthè'* in itself settles nothing; it does however underline Jesus' own initiative). See especially A. Pelletier, 'Les apparitions du Ressuscité', l.c., 76-79; 'He showed himself' or *'God* made him epiphanous' is

relate to Jesus; what is called 'appearing', therefore, is clearly not to be characterized as deriving merely from human psychology; on the contrary, it is described as an initiative of Jesus himself, his gracious act: God in Christ is party to it.

Paul then gives a list of persons, all preaching the same resurrection kerygma*:* Jesus showed himself (1) first to Cephas and the twelve; (2) afterwards to five hundred brethren; (3) to James and all the apostles; and (4) to Paul as the last of these apostles (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

To understand this passage properly we must first determine what Paul had [348] in mind when he wrote it. The context nowhere suggests that he was seeking to legitimize his apostolic status, as is often argued. It shows Paul reacting to a misconception about resurrection among the Corinthians. Before engaging in discussion with his opponents he reminds them of the fundamental religious identity of all Christian churches: 'I would remind you ... in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand' (1 Cor. 15:1), and that is the Easter kerygma, the 'crucified and risen one'. 'Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed' (1 Cor. 15:11). Peter and the twelve, the five hundred brethren, James, all the apostles and, least among them, Paul as well − they all proclaim the crucified-and-risen one (1 Cor. 15:5-8). That is obviously what Paul means by *ôphthé*: God caused Jesus 'to be seen' by all the aforementioned people; for all these apostles Jesus became 'epiphanous', that is, they all proclaimed that the crucified one had risen. Everything that goes by the name of 'apostolic authority' in the early church testifies to one and the same basic creed: the crucified one has risen. And that the Corinthians accepted in faith. In their enthusiasm they merely drew wrong conclusions from it, which Paul then proceeds to correct (1 Cor. 15:12ff). Thus the aim of the epiphany term *ôphthè* (he appeared) is this religious identity; Paul starts with a 'unifying formula'. *Ôphthè* in this context, then, indicates a legitimation formula: the heavenly Jesus is actively at work in his messengers or missionaries. These apostles have been sent by Jesus himself to proclaim this − and no other − faith.

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preferred, as appears also, for instance, from the Septuagint: *ôphthè ho Theos tôi Abram* (Gen. 12:7); see other Old Testament theophanies (Gen. 18:1-2; Num. 12:5; Josh. 5:13) or angelophanies (Judges 13; Ex. 3:2; 6:3; Gen. 12:7). *'ôphthè'* is also frequently used in Genesis for revelations, even when no visual element at all is present (Gen. 12:7; 17:1; 22:14; 26:2,24; 35:9; 48:3 with 35:11), or when the visual elements are minimal (Judges 13:3; Chron. 3:1; 1 Chron. 21:16; Judges 6:11-12, 21). *'ôphthè'* with the dative expresses God's initiative; it contrasts with *'ephanè'* and *'phainesthai',* which rather suggest a vision (Mt. 1:20; 2:13,19). The terminology comes quite clearly, via the Septuagint, from the Old Testament theophanies (a self-disclosure by God). Use of another word might evoke the idea of the reanimation of a corpse. This danger is already present in Acts 1:3 *(Ièsous...parestèsen heauton dzōnta),* but nowhere do we read what Josephus says later on: *'Iésous …ephanè autois palin dzōn' (Antiquities,* 20, 64). Cf. J. Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 72, 143-144; Leon-Dufour, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 50, 167; R. Fuller, *Resurrection narratives,* 30; G. Delling, in W. Marxsen *et al., Die Bedeutung der Auferstehungsbotschaft,* 72; H. Braun, in ThLZ 77 (1952), 533-536.

Men have 'killed and buried' Jesus, God has 'raised him and made him epiphanous': this would seem to be the contrast schema that clearly underlies 1 Cor. 15:3-8: all who have a missionary mandate in the 'great church' witness to it. This, apparently, is the tenor of 1 Cor. 15:3-11. The 'appearances', and thus the *ôphthè* terminology (which does not feature in Paul's other writings, or in the rest of 1 Cor. 15), clearly express the universal church's apostolic kerygma. Paul is not listing *witnesses* to the resurrection – that is foreign to him. He is listing authorities who all proclaim the same message, namely, that the crucified one is alive and has shown himself to them; one and the same evidential ground inspires them all. On that premise the Christians go on to 'missionize', first in Israel, then beyond. This historical expansion of Christianity, grounded in a unifying formula, is what Paul (in accordance with
[349] his own views, albeit on the basis of traditions known to him) is depicting in 1 Cor. 15:3-11.

He speaks first about the faith and the missionary activity of 'Peter and the twelve'. The five hundred brethren appear to be the earliest nucleus of the eschatological 'church of Christ', the new kingdom of the twelve tribes, Israel, won by 'Peter and the twelve'. Paul is apparently thinking of what according to him (or his source) was the core of the Jerusalem mother church. Then he speaks of the faith and missionary activity of James and all the apostles. 'All the apostles' are not the same twelve, but 'missionaries' who spread the church of Christ outside Jerusalem but as yet only in Palestine and its environs, that is, among both Aramaic- and Greek-speaking Jews. In Acts Luke himself mentions 'the seven', known as the deacons, who preached the crucified-and-risen one to the Jews of the Diaspora and to Samaria.[40] This second expansion − in which the heavenly Jesus becomes epiphanous − obviously involved missionary activities outside Judea, developments which inaugurated the apostolic mission to Israel as a whole, including the Diaspora. According to Paul (or his tradition) James was the leader in charge of this ambitious mission of the church to Israel, just as Peter and his followers had taken the lead in the very first proclamation of the faith.[41] To this probably traditional view of the expansion of the faith in the crucified-and-risen one Paul now adds his legitimate proclamation to the gentiles (including the Corinthians, who received the same faith from him). Among all those apostolic preachers he is 'the last', that is, the least (because he had previously opposed this faith). With

[40] In Rom. 16:7 Paul mentions Andronicus and Junias – two Greek names – as apostles, that is, missionaries who proclaim Christ to (Greek-speaking) *Jews* 'as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch' (see Acts 11:19b). See H. von Campenhausen, *Der urchristliche Apostelbegriff,* in *Studia Theologica* 1 (1948) 96ff; G. Klein, *Die zwölf Apostel* (FRLANT, 59) (Göttingen 1961), 39-43.

[41] See Gal. 1:19; 2:9,12; also Mt. 10:23; Rom. 10:21. After his conversion Paul visits only Peter and also James (Gal. 1:19); moreover, in the best manuscripts James comes before Peter in Gal. 2:9. According to Gal. 2:12 *James* sends messengers to inspect the missionary area of Antioch.

the help of traditional data on the history of the young church – maybe his own insights as well – Paul sketches the expansion of the one faith in the crucified-and-risen one, as shared by all possessed of apostolic authority in the church: the early church, the church in Israel as a whole, and finally the church among the gentiles. Luke 24 presents the same (historically incorrect) picture: starting with the Christianization of Jerusalem, the church of the crucified-and-risen one spreads to Israel as a whole and, beyond that, among the gentiles. In tradition history there is indeed a link between 1 Cor. 15:3-8 and Lk. 24:34, the oldest core of which is: 'The Lord has risen and he appeared to Simon' − itself an amalgam of two traditions: 'He has risen' and 'He appeared to Simon'. In Acts 10:41 and 13:31 we read of appearances in general (10:41), further described in 13:51. Remarkably, Jn. 21 (although in reverse order) also has the tradition of a group of disciples, with Peter singled out for mention.

Initially the new fact of the Jesus appearances was apparently not localized. [350]
Paul, at any rate, does not do so. The implicit localizing relates to the mission field where the message of the resurrection was spread. At a certain point when the actual mission in which apostles proclaim the crucified-and-risen one was legitimated, as it were, by what in 'epiphany' circles had come to be called 'appearances of Jesus': the concrete embodiment of their belief in the crucified one's here-and-now activity in the missionary activities of Jesus' messengers. The appearance to 'Peter and the eleven' would seem, explicitly or implicitly, to be a fixed tradition in all the gospels.[42]

Exegetes have argued endlessly about the age of the tradition cited by Paul (1 Cor. 15:4-5; the rest − 15:6-9 – is probably largely his own): from a formula dating from the years immediately following Jesus' death to one virtually devised by Paul himself, theories range between a Jerusalem formula, an Antiochene formula, a formula dating from the forties, from the thirties, an Antiochene formula based on a Jerusalem recollection, et cetera.[43] The pericope is marked by Semitisms (more exactly, Septuagintal features, the language of

[42] Besides 1 Cor. 15:3-5; Lk. 24:34 (see 24:12); Jn. 21:15-17. Mk. 16:7 refers very probably (see later) to the parousia, but the later ending Mark (16:9-20) has been attached to the appearances. Only Matthew seems to be unfamiliar with the special mention of Peter in this connection, but elsewhere he has highlighted the *'kefa'* function.

[43] B. van Iersel, *St. Paul et la prédication de l'eglise primitive* (An. Bibl. 17-18) (Rome 1963), I, 433-441; K. Lehmann, *Am dritten Tag,* 87-115; Ph. Seidensticker, 'Das Antiochenische Glaubensbekenntnis I Kor. 15:3-7 im Lichte seiner Traditionsgeschichte', in ThGl 57 (1967), 286-323; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 197-198; H. Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* 84-85, and 'Zur Analyse der Bekenntnis formel 1 Kor. 15:3b-5', in EvTh 25 (1965), 1-11; J. Jeremias, 'Zur Ursprache von 1 Kor. 15:3b-5', in ZNW 57 (1966), 211-215; H. Grasz, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte,* 94-106; U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* (Neukirchen 1963²), 73-81; B. Klappert, 'Zur Frage des semitischen oder griechischen Urtextes von 'Kor. 15:3-5', in NTS 13 (1966-1967), 168-173; Käsemann, in *Besinnungen I,* 225; E. Lohse, *Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi,* 10; G. Schule, *Die urchristliche Kollegialmission* (Zürich 1967), and *Die Anfänge der Kirche* (Munich 1966); W. Bartsch, 'Die Argumentation des Paulus in 1 Kor. 15:3-11', in ZNW 55 (1964), 261-274; J. Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis,* l.c.

bilingual Jews), but also by Pauline expressions. However, Semitisms tell us nothing about the age of a tradition (see Part One: 'invalid criteria'), because they were current among Greek-speaking Jews like Paul; and 'Antiochene' does not mean very much either, as we know that Paul himself played a creative role in the Antiochene church, so terms like 'Pauline' or 'pre-Pauline' become very ambiguous. Tradition and a Pauline approach turn out to be inextricably combined in 1 Cor. 15:4-9. The list of apostolic authorities cited by Paul in itself presupposes a whole process of development in early Christianity, an evolved theology and even ecclesiology.

Whereas Paul may have been speaking about the early apostolic mission (in Jerusalem, in all Israel and the Diaspora, and lastly among the gentiles), the gospels speak in the context of an already established 'great church': here the appearances are a legitimation of the apostolic missionary enterprise of proclaiming the crucified-and-risen one 'to all peoples', Jews and gentiles. In other words, the gospels leave out the phases in the apostolic mission (and thus in the 'Christ appearances'), which Paul evidently still has in mind. In the gospels the appearances reflect the actual missionary practice of the Matthean, Lukan and Johannine local churches with their own theologies. Thus the initial
[351] recognition of the eschatological presence and epiphany of God in Jesus Christ, and thence in the Christian emissaries, would have been the immediate basis of the apostolic proclamation of the crucified-and-risen one to all the world.

(b) Manifestation, preaching and act of faith

Theologically it is worthwhile putting the four elements that Paul identifies − he died and was buried, but God raised him up and made him 'epiphanous' – in their Pauline context instead of objectivizing them by lifting them out of it. In that way an important point emerges.

In his letter Paul is in conversation with Christians at Corinth. In this discourse, couched in the present tense ('I remind you, brethren', 1 Cor. 15:1), there are verbs in the perfect tense, while the style of address remains very personal: 'The gospel which I preached to you' (15:1, 2, 3), past history common to the Corinthians and to Paul enter into the narrative. In this 'I-you' discourse there is suddenly mention of a 'he': another story is thrust into the 'I-you' story, resulting in three intersecting levels: Paul addressing the Corinthians − insertion of a biographical story: Paul preached, the Corinthians believed − lastly, the insertion of a story about a third party, Jesus of Nazareth.[44] In that way three biographical stories are intrinsically conjoined: Paul's preaching activity, the Corinthians' conversion, and the story of Jesus, who is dead but who has been raised to life by God and has revealed himself to

[44] J. Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 72, 107-113.

Christ's official witnesses. In other words, the present tense of the discourse is that of life renewed in Christ, both for the Corinthians and for Paul; what is more, this present has a future.[45] What Paul says about Christ and his resurrection cannot be dissociated from the personal tone of his speech, in which the Corinthians are involved. The insertion of '(died) for our sins' relates Jesus' death to the present of the Corinthians; Paul adds: Jesus 'appeared also to me'. On the one hand the appearances are a constituent of the basic story (Jesus died but was raised) and, on the other, the object of Paul's autobiographical story.[46] Grammatically the primary story is the object of verbs [352] like evangelize, proclaim, receive and hand on, and believe (1 Cor. 15:1-3, 11). Thus the text itself tells us how we are to understand the primary story: it is a matter of proclaiming Jesus' death, resurrection and appearance *as good news*. The primary story in the third person − he died but has risen again − only acquires its full significance in the context of this announcement of good, new and receptive faith. The preaching (1 Cor. 15:1) as well as the receptive belief (15:11) are the effective outcome of the primary story. That is to say, the latter cannot be detached from the proclamation and faith; this Jesus story is the *raison d'être* both of Paul and of the Christians at Corinth; the primary story cannot be understood in an objectivized context. Affirming the resurrection in faith entails the believer's personal involvement in the story thus accepted: speaking of the risen Jesus implies a personal experience, interpreted as an initiative of the other, of Jesus himself.[47]

Jesus is presented as the risen one in a collective − ecclesial − experience. Hence the source of this talk about the risen Jesus as risen is the experience of a new life. The full meaning of what Peter and the eleven experienced becomes evident only in their mission, in what they do, proclaim, in their actual life and praxis. The origin of their faith is the abiding essence of the Christian faith itself. The gospel narratives will clarify this.

B. 'JESUS SHOWED HIMSELF TO PETER AND THE ELEVEN'

The earliest references to the risen Jesus speak of his death and resurrection, not about 'appearances'. Neither the Q community nor the original Markan gospel mentions Jesus' appearances. In 1 Cor. 15:3-8 there is no appearance story, only a list of official witnesses to the Christian faith. Even Matthew has no report of an actual appearance but amplifies Mk. 16:7 with *theologoumena* or

[45] 1 Cor. 15:23-28; 15:19,30-32,58; 15:20-22,42-53.
[46] Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 72, 110-111.
[47] Although in a complicated form the same kind of structural analysis is possible in the case of Acts 2:22-23; 3:13-15; 4:10; 5:30 and all New Testament passages referring to Jesus' death 'for our sins' and his resuscitation by God.

theological comments on the Matthean church's self-understanding. Still, Matthew does mark a transition; one could say that he presents an account of mission associated with Jesus' appearance rather than of an actual appearance: when it comes to how and what happened he says nothing at all. Only Luke and John contain accounts of appearances in the strict sense: here the tradition of the actual appearances becomes an object of reflection for the first time. They begin to talk about the form and manner of these manifestations – an altogether new feature in the gospel tradition as such.

Directly or indirectly, all the gospels refer to the appearance to the eleven: Mt. 28:16-20; Lk. 24:36-53; Jn. 20:19-23; also in the conclusion to Mark, which
[353] was a later addition. Like 1 Cor. 15:3-4, Lk. 24:34 mentions the appearance to Peter separately, although we are told nothing substantial about it. Since the twelve are represented as disbelieving all other appearances, the evangelists' intention is obvious: to present the appearance to Peter and the eleven as the basis of the christological kerygma. The crux of the exegetical result is the official manifestation to Simon Peter and the eleven (either in the presence of others or not, as Lk. 24:33b says); an 'official' appearance which according to Mt. 28:16-20 occurred in Galilee, but according to Lk. 24:36-53 in Jerusalem, while John combines the two traditions: he speaks of appearances in Jerusalem to the eleven (with and without Thomas) (Jn. 20:19-23; 20:24-29), and in a later addition he also mentions appearances in Galilee (Jn. 21:1-15). Hence we may describe the appearance 'to Peter and the eleven' as an *apostolic* manifestation of Christ, associated in the gospels with the commissioning of the apostles: Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:48, 49; Jn. 20:22-23 (see also Mt. 28:10; Jn. 20:17; and Mk. 16:15-18).[48]

Analysis of these apostolic manifestations reveals three elements:

(a) The *initiative* comes from the risen Jesus himself; the appearance is a saving act of Jesus in the life of Peter and the eleven: *ôphthè*, Jesus 'showed himself'; what is normally invisible made itself visible: the invisible making itself visible is expressed in terms of human perception, the human character of which is at the same time repudiated or corrected (cf. Ex. 33:20-23; Ex. 3:6; Judges 13:23).

(b) An element of *recognition*, the content of which is provided by the apostolic kerygma*:* (on the third day) the dead man rose (Lk. 24:46, equivalent to the kerygma in Acts 2:23-32;. 3:15-16; 4:10-11; 5:30-31; 10:39-40; 13:38-41): Jesus is recognized and acknowledged as the Christ, the Lord, the living Jesus of Nazareth − living beyond death. Recognition expresses itself in *proskynesis,* worshipful prostration: 'When they saw him, they fell down in worship' (Mt. 28:17; by implication also in Jn. 20:17; again in Mt. 28:9-10; see Lk. 24:52).

[48] The distinction between official and private appearances has been a classic one since the study by M. Albertz, 'Zur Formgeschichte der Auferstehungsberichte', in ZAW 21 (1922), 259-269.

(c) An element of *witness* or *commitment to mission*: this is the basis of the function of the twelve, always expounded in terms of their local church's own theology. The principle of apostolic authority – the apostolicity of the church – [354] is clearly affirmed in the paramount manifestation of Christ to Peter and the eleven (see Mt. 28:10; Jn. 20:17; in Lk. 24:8 and 24:10 the women report Christ's manifestation to themselves to the eleven on their own initiative. The principle of apostolic authority is already operative). It should be noted that initially the appearances are not reported with any apologetic purpose in view, as a kind of proof of Jesus' resurrection. What is at issue is simply the legitimation of the apostolic missionary mandate, not some affirmation that the resurrection actually took place. That is why the apostolic kerygma says nothing about the appearances of Jesus. The resurrection was believed in before there was any question of appearances.

The element of confession (recognition) includes the primary, initial experiences of the disciples, of which we are told only that after his death Jesus 'made himself seen'; the element of mission does not mention the original experiences of the twelve. Instead it discloses the meaning of the Easter event as interpreted by the burgeoning church in light of its concrete praxis and theological reflections. In other words, there are only appearances; nowhere does the New Testament reproduce 'appearance sayings' of Jesus himself. It is not concerned with the origin of the church of Christ, but with its essential nature grounded in the kerygma of the crucified-and-risen one. The differences in the gospel accounts indicate the structure and intention of what an appearance of Christ signified.

Mt. 28:16-20: From this emerges (a) a solemn proclamation of Jesus as *kosmokrator,* ruler of the world, vested with plenary power in heaven and on earth (28:18b); (b) the risen one's commission of the eleven to go out to all nations (28:19); the substance of their mission is to make all nations disciples of Jesus, which entails baptizing them and instructing them in the words of Jesus (28:19); the reference is to Christian instruction through baptism, which incorporates the whole Jesus tradition; hence according to Matthew a disciple is someone who has been baptized and observes Jesus' precepts; (c) lastly, a promise of Jesus' constant helping presence and support in this apostolic task (28:20b).

This structure discloses two facts: firstly, in its present situation the church put sayings of the earthly Jesus into the mouth of the risen, manifesting Christ; secondly, the church's actual practice is presented as grounded in the words of the manifesting Jesus. His solemn self-proclamation consists in pre-Matthean logia of Jesus (see Mt. 11:27, from the Q source; with Daniel 7:14 as background); the 'missionary' sayings, too, are modelled on the earthly Jesus' great commission of the disciples (cf. Mt. 28:19 with 10:5); likewise, the

[355] promise of Jesus' abiding presence in the church is based on Jesus-logia: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Mt. 18:20; see 1:23). In other words, in the post-Easter situation three logia of Jesus were combined to form the content of what is called a Christ manifestation. In Mt. 10:5-6 and 15:24 (see 13:38) the mission was still restricted to Israel; in the account of the appearance it is a mission to the whole world. Thus the appearance is no longer presented as the source and ground of the eschatological community, but as the church's mandate for its mission (here in respect of the apostolic office). Apart from the affirmation of the gracious initiative of Jesus' self-revelation after his death, the purport of the appearance as Matthew relates it is a Matthean *theologoumenon,* that is, a theological assertion of the universal and total authority of Christ, which is the basis of the church's universal mission to the whole world. The resurrection is the beginning and the abiding foundation of the church's life. The church is founded on a saving act of the risen Jesus, but is not unrelated to what Jesus said and did in his life on earth. Apart from the reference to a gracious initiative of Jesus after his death nothing is said about the actual manifestation.

Lk. 24:36-49: Here, too, the core is the apostolic kerygma as formulated by Luke (on the basis of pre-Lukan traditions) in Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:41; 13:31. The pericope, though in a literary sense independent, is akin to Jn. 20:19-23, probably on the basis of a piece of tradition embracing the missionary mandate and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Typically Lukan is 24:44-49, where instead of the 'sending forth' Peter and the eleven are commissioned by the risen one as witnesses and guarantors of the apostolic belief in the resurrection, and where the promise of the gift of the Spirit replaces the actual gift. Luke associates the sending out of the twelve and the actual outpouring of the Spirit with Pentecost, while for him resurrection and ascension are separated by a forty-day interim. Thus this Lukan theology entails changing the substance of the appearances: the Easter appearance is the bridge between the end of Jesus' life task on earth and, via the ascension, the beginning of the church's pneumatic missionary task. The structure of the Christ manifestation in Luke, therefore, is as follows:

(a) First the apostolic kerygma is presented (24:44-46): the death and resurrection, but as depicted in holy Scripture, that is, as part of God's plan of salvation. On the basis of this salvation-historical death and resurrection the church proclaims, in the power of Jesus' name, *metanoia* or repentance and
[356] forgiveness of sins (the allusion here, as in Matthew, is clearly to the Christian baptism of repentance; see also Jn. 20:23) for all peoples. Of the twelve it is said: 'You are witnesses of these things' (24:46,47a).

(b) Then follows, not 'Go, therefore' (as in Matthew), but 'Stay in Jerusalem': the sending forth itself is a gift at Pentecost ('until the Spirit comes', 24:49). The

Lukan church has the risen Jesus definitively declare God's salvific plan with Jesus: Jesus forms a nucleus of followers able to testify 'to these things' during his absence from earth, that is, to witness to Jesus' place in the divine salvific dispensation.[49] In the Lukan account the risen one, now manifested, appoints the twelve (the eleven, later supplemented by Matthias, Acts 1:16-26) as pillars of the faith (only at Pentecost are they sent on their mission). As in Acts 1:8, so in Lk. 24:48 the evangelist articulates his conception of an apostle in his report of Jesus' appearances.

(c) 'But you shall receive power from the holy Spirit ... to be my witnesses, starting from Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth' (Acts 1:8). The pneumatic witness is the sign of the 'age of the church' between ascension and parousia, by virtue of the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost. Indeed, Acts 1:21-22 makes it clear that according to Luke it is not enough to have been an eyewitness of Jesus' life on earth in order to be an apostle of Jesus Christ; it is also necessary to have been officially appointed a witness to his resurrection.[50] That does not mean simply to have witnessed the mere event (which Luke does not mention), but to be a witness to the resurrection as an event in God's salvific plan: that is, the twelve have been appointed witnesses to God's salvific purposes in Jesus Christ.[51] And in the church their mandate is classified under the fulfilment of Scripture.

The core of the Lukan manifestation of Christ is thus: (a) identification of Jesus of Nazareth with the Christ; in other words, the apostolic kerygma; (b) divine legitimation and appointment of the apostles as guarantors of the apostolic faith; and (c) the promise of the Spirit to come.

Jn. 20:19-23: The same structural elements are to be found in the context of a distinctively Johannine theology: (a) again the element of recognition (20:19-20) is followed by (b) the commissioning of the disciples;[52] on the basis of the Father's sending of Jesus the (Johannine) Jesus now sends his disciples, and (c) to that end he gives them the Spirit (20:21-22); the official ministry of remitting sin (20:23) is specifically mentioned in this connection. Here, in contrast to Mt. [357]
18:18 and 16:19, 'binding and loosing' are associated with Christian baptism (cf. Lk. 24:47). *Metanoia* is accepting the Christian kerygma: turning to God in and through Jesus as the Christ (see Jn. 1:11), for the world's great sin is not 'believing' (Jn. 8:21,24,26; 15:22). The gift of the Spirit is bound up with the

[49] Chr. Burchard, *Der dreizehnte Zeuge* (Göttingen 1970), 130-135; U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* (Neukirchen 1963²), 148.

[50] In Acts 10:39 an exception appears to be made to this: his whole life from his baptism is apparently sufficient here; so also in this discourse: 10:34-43; but that life is seen there as a prelude to death and resurrection.

[51] 'It is written' (Lk. 24:46) is identical with 'necessary to salvation history' (24:26).

[52] Since John is unfamiliar with the idea of 'the eleven', and the notion of 'the twelve' is hardly known to him (only in Jn. 6:67-71 and here: Jn. 20:24), he speaks of 'the disciples'.

ministry of reconciliation (see also 2 Cor. 5:18). This gift was already promised beforehand (Jn. 14:26 and 14:17; 15:26-27; 16:7-15). Thus John, too, fills out the appearance of Christ with his own Christology and ecclesiology.

A later addition, John 21, incorporates material from the Galilean tradition of Christ appearances − but attuned to the spirit of the Johannine gospel via a special focus on Jesus' beloved disciple (Jn. 21:7; see Jn. 20:8; Jn. 21:20-23).

The appended conclusion: Mk. 16:9-20: (As mentioned already, Mark's original gospel contains no accounts of appearances.) Mark 16:8-11 was added on the basis of Jn. 20:1-11, 18; Mk. 16:12-13 on that of Lk. 24:13-35; Mk. 16:14-18, on that of Mt. 28:16-20, Jn. 20:19-23 and especially Lk. 24:36-49. But this combination is inspired by the Markan conception of the way from unbelief to belief.[53] The purpose of the sending forth by the risen Jesus likewise derives from Mark, namely to preach the gospel: to spread the faith and baptize (Mk. 16:16), and to do what Jesus did: heal the sick and drive out devils, 'while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it' (Mk. 16:20). Again the Lord's constant assistance features. Although this coda is composed of material from the other three evangelists, it has been edited into a coherent whole in the spirit of the Markan gospel.

From the fourfold account − taken as a whole − of the official, apostolic 'manifestation of Christ' to the eleven we get a clear picture of the function of what is known as the 'appearance of the risen one': in the recognition of Jesus as the risen Christ the church begins to take shape; it legitimates the apostolic mission to the world: to make everybody disciples of Christ (Matthew), to further a ministry of reconciliation (Matthew, John), as proclamation of the gospel (later appendage to Mark); or as the foundation of the apostolic faith (Luke). In all this Jesus himself (Matthew; the later conclusion to Mark) or the Holy Spirit (Luke and John) will assist the twelve. The actual substance of the
[358] official manifestation was inspired by the apostolic kerygma in its differing ecclesiological variants in the local congregations of the early church. The Easter experience − Jesus is the Lord − or that of receiving the gift of the Spirit is the foundation of the church and its mission. The gospels and Paul (1 Cor. 15: 3-8) clearly emphasize the collegiality of the apostolic witness to Christ, apparently under the direction[54] of Simon Peter (1 Cor. 15:3-5; Lk. 24: 34; see Mt. 28:16; Jn. 20:19ff).

Hence the manifestation of the risen one itself is, as it were, an 'empty' vessel; but it is filled with the 'apostolic kerygma', which thus emerges as sheer divine revelation, leaving the twelve empowered to advance the cause of Jesus. At bottom the manifestation is God's specific salvific act in Christ, enabling the

[53] See B. van Ierscl, *Een begin,* 96-97; R. Fuller, *Resurrection narratives,* 156.
[54] See A. Vögtle, 'Ekklesiologische Aufträge', l.c. (Sacra Pagina, II, 280-94), now also in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (Düsseldorf 1971), 243-252; see also, op. cit., 137-170.

disciples to identify Jesus with the Christ, the Lord, the Son of God, and to know beyond doubt that they have been sent to proclaim this Christ to all the world as the crucified-and-risen one. The moment of 'manifestation' indicates 'vertically' that the apostolic kerygma and the church's actual praxis are characterized by grace and revelation. In the verticality of the manifestation – in antiquity an expression for an 'epiphany' or divine revelation − is concentrated the grace, imparted by salvation history, of what had been happening (horizontally) in the Matthean, Lukan and Johannine churches for years: the preaching of the gospel to Jew and pagan, Christian baptism and the ministry of reconciliation, in faith-inspired assurance that in all of this Jesus was at work. The heavenly Jesus' activity in the church is expressed in terms of epiphany. The 'substance' of the manifestation is supplied by the concrete life of the church as the 'community of Christ'. Worship is the response to the experience of grace: they see Jesus and worship him. In terms of narrative structure the 'appearance' is an extrapolation of that grace: the story is a religious rendering of God's saving activity *in* the church, from its very beginnings to what were already the second and third Christian generations. Even when after Jesus' appearance to Peter, Luke, with his characteristic touch, says: 'He has indeed risen' (Lk. 24:34) the other disciples are doubtful; that is, they, too, must experience the christological confession personally as sheer grace.

In the appearance narratives, therefore, that doubt fulfils a very specific function: Mt. 28:17; Lk. 24:11, 37-41; Jn. 20:9,25,27; it is not forgotten even in the later canonical end to Mark: Mk. 16:11,13-14. Some have wrongly called this doubt a secondary element. Matthew, who does not mention the separate [359]
appearance to Peter, does accommodate the saying about Peter, the rock, elsewhere.[55] Hence the uneven character of Mt. 28:16: 'Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they fell down and worshipped him; but some doubted.' This doubt (after first worshipping him!) may be a vestige of the doubt felt by the disciples after the first appearance to Peter (Lk. 24:34 and 24:38). There is no other reference to doubt after the appearance to the twelve, but it is mentioned in too many traditions for us to call it secondary. There are, of course, theological differences. John does not report that the disciples doubted, but seems to refer to this doubt in his separate story about an appearance to Thomas (Jn. 20:24-29).[56] And the nature of the doubt in Matthew is not the

[55] According to A. Vögtle a historical recollection of the first appearance of Jesus to Peter lurks behind Mt. 16:17-19, in 'Zum Problem der Herkunft von Mt. 16:17-19', in *Orientierung an Jesus* (372-393), esp. 377-383.

[56] It seems to me no coincidence that only Thomas, in whose name the East Syrian Church (Edessa) according to its tradition considers itself to have been founded, has doubts about the risen one. East Syria became the cradle of a Christology minus a resurrection kerygma, out of which

same as in the accounts of appearances peculiar to Luke and John 20 and 21. For Matthew the doubt concerns conversion, that is, whether (the already recognized) Jesus will be recognized as the risen Christ: will Jesus 'be viewed christologically'? In Luke and John, on the other hand − whose ideas, at any rate as represented, show traces of the 'rapture' theory of the *theios anèr* model − doubt regarding manifestations of one who has been 'snatched away' assumes a Greek pattern: what is in doubt is not whether he is the Christ, but whether the person who appears is indeed Jesus of Nazareth. At first they think they are seeing 'a spirit', a spectre or 'shade', not the real Jesus of Nazareth. The detail: 'see − or touch [as to Thomas in John] − my hands and my feet. It is I myself' (Lk. 24:38-39) accords perfectly with the 'rapture' model of appearances. Hellenists first need to establish the presence of the real Jesus (the 'it is I' in this model has no intended christological implication). In Hellenistic fashion this point is underscored by 'the eating of fish' (Lk. 24:40-43). It is this doubt about the nature of the manifestation that gave rise to the appearance stories (neither Paul nor Matthew recount actual appearances). Only when Jesus has been identified as Jesus can there be any question of 'seeing him' christologically, that is, acknowledging him as the living Christ. The important thing is that − albeit via the Hellenistic model of manifestations − attention is focused on the absolute identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the crucified-and-risen one or the kerygmatic Christ.

The emphasis on the disciples' doubt is meant to highlight the christological
[360] kerygma's affirmation that it is an act of divine grace. The apostles initially react antagonistically to the appearances reported by the women and the Emmaus disciples: they refuse to believe it. Mark, who portrays the disciples' shock at the arrest and death of Jesus as a flight (Mk. 14:50; see 14:40), also has the women fleeing from the tomb without saying a word to anyone about what had happened (Mk. 16:8b). Throughout his gospel he emphasizes human inability to grasp the Jesus mystery. At the foot of the cross, according to Mark, a gentile is the first to acknowledge Jesus as 'son of God' (15:39), hence that the gospel is for all nations (Mk. 13:10; 14:9); Jesus is not only the messiah of the Jews. Mark's mention of the women remaining silent may underscore the independence of the 'apostolic tradition' from the Jerusalem tomb traditions.

The element of recognition − 'seeing Jesus *christologically*' − is expressed most powerfully in Jn. 20:24-51: after doubting, Thomas repents and says: 'My Lord and my God' (20:28). To qualify as a recognition experience a manifestation of Christ has to be seen and recognized as God's eschatological presence among us.[57]

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subsequently the gospel of Thomas, and later still the Acts of Thomas, were to grow.

[57] Does not signify, therefore: Jesus is God *tout court;* see Jn. 5:18; 8:58; 10:30; 10:33; 12:45; 14:9; 17:11. See R. Fuller, *Resurrection narratives,* 143-144.

In conclusion: literary analysis of the stories about Jesus 'making himself seen' after his death shows that they concern the christological identification of Jesus of Nazareth, experienced as sheer divine grace and as ground and source of the church's mission. As a preliminary analysis that must suffice.

C. 'ON THE ROAD PAUL SAW THE LORD' (ACTS 9:27): THE DAMASCUS NARRATIVE (ACTS 9, 22, 26)

Literature (besides that already mentioned). J. Blank, *Paulus und Jesus* (Münster 1968); Chr. Burchard, *Der dreizehnte Zeuge* (Göttingen 1970); H. Conzelmann, 'Zur Analyse der Bekenntnisformel 1 Cor. 15:3-5', EvTh 25 (1965), 1-11**;** R. Fuller, *The formation of the resurrection narratives* (New York 1971); B. Gerhardson, *Memory and manuscript* (ASNT, no. 22) (Lund 1961); L. Goppelt, 'Tradition bei Paulus', KuD 4 (1958), 213-233; E. Hirsch, 'Die drei Berichte der Apostelgeschichte und die Bekehrung des Paulus', ZNW 28 (1929), 305-312; H. Kasting, *Die Anfänge der urchristlichen Mission* (Beih, EvTh, no. 55) (Munich 1969); G. Lohfink, *La conversion de saint Paul* (Paris 1967), and: 'Eine alttestamentliche Darstellungsform für Gotteserscheinungen in den Damaskusberichten (Apg. 9; 22; 26)', BZ 9 (1965), 246-257; D. Lührmann, *Das* [361]
Offenbarungsverständnis bei Paulus und in paulinischer Gemeinden (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1965); D. M. Stanley, 'Paul's conversion in Acts: why the three accounts?', CBQ 15 (1953), 315-338; H. Windisch, 'Die Christusepiphanie vor Damaskus (Acts 9; 22 und 26) und ihre religionsgeschichtliche Parallellen', ZNW 31 (1952), 1-23.

It is often said that Paul based his apostolate on the fact that Jesus, the crucified-and-risen one, also made himself seen to him. The evidence usually cited is 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8-11; Gal. 1:15-17: 'last of all, as to one untimely born (*ektrôma*), he appeared also to me'.[58] So before we examine Luke's view of the Damascus event we should first determine how Paul himself regarded it. Above we gave an interpretation of 1 Cor. 15:3-11 and saw that the passage is not an apostolic legitimation based on appearances of Jesus. The same applies to 1 Cor. 9:1: 'Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my workmanship in the Lord?' These are manifestly four relatively separate questions, though the second is usually taken to be the basis of the third. But on what grounds, if we read the passage, not against the background of the gospels, but in its Pauline context? The typical epiphany term *ôphthè* − which is non-Pauline anyway − is absent (what we have is

[58] '*Ektrôma*' is a medical term; it means: someone who by means of surgical intervention has been born of a dying mother, who was therefore never seen by the newborn child. But Paul calls himself an 'eyewitness' (therein lies the point of the expression).

heoraka, I have seen). After all, it is not certain that Gal. 1:15-17, 'when he was pleased to reveal his Son to me' (here: 'to reveal his Son *in* me'), bears directly on Paul's Damascus experience. In other words, in his own writings Paul never says that he grounds his apostolate on his Damascus road 'seeing of Jesus'. 'By being called an apostle' (Rom. 1:1), 'set apart and called from the womb' (Gal. 1:15), and finally legitimatized by the church through laying on of hands, he is sent out by the leaders of the congregation at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). No doubt Paul sees his conversion to Jesus Christ as God's way of bringing the gospel 'to all nations' (Gal. 1:13-16), but there is no mention of a 'manifestation'; and though he did not consult those who had been apostles longer than he (Gal. 1:16-17), he was initiated into Christianity by Christians at Antioch. This he considers to have been 'a gracious favour of the Lord'; and he sees in it his independence from the apostles in Jerusalem, who had not laid hands on him,
[362] although he preached the same belief in the crucified-and-risen one (1 Cor 15:11). 'To have seen Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. 9:1) implied preaching the same faith as that proclaimed by all the apostles; but it can hardly be said that, at any rate for Paul (as distinct from Luke), Jesus' appearance to him was the actual mandate for his apostolate. What it signified was that all the apostles shared the same faith.

How does Luke interpret the tradition of Paul's Damascus experience? In Acts he recounts it no fewer than three times: Acts 9, 22 and 26. Structural analysis of these accounts, based on the principles of 'the semeiotics of narration',[59] enables us to establish what Luke meant by a Christ appearance more exactly than has been done so far. According to the rules of scientific literary study a text contains linguistic signals indicating how the passage should be understood. That makes the three Damascus stories all the more important, because the differences, transformations and shifts between them show how 'manipulable' the phenomenon called an appearance of Jesus is. The second and third accounts are in point of fact interpretive discussions of the first Damascus narrative (in other words, meta-language). Thus the scriptural text is self-interpreting. That reveals the 'matrix' of the vision. Actually Acts 22 and 26 do not refer to the Damascus event itself but − in the context of Acts − to the Damascus story already related there (Acts 9).

The story of Paul in Acts is about the great mission to the gentiles, accomplished by Paul but to be interpreted as a glorious manifestation of God's mercy, graciousness and absolute initiative. From Ananias's vision (Acts

[59] See R. Barthes, 'Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits', in *Communications* 8 (1966), 1-28; 'L'écriture de l'évènement', in l.c., 12 (1968), 108-113; and *Analyse structurale et exegese biblique* (Neuchâtel 1971); T. van Dijk, *Moderne literatuur-theorie* (Amsterdam 1971); F. Maatje, *Literatuurwetenschap* (Utrecht 1971²); R. Batthes *et al., Exégèse et herméneutique* (Pazrs 1971); C. Cabrol and L. Marin, *Sémiotique narrative: récits bibliques,* in *Langages* 6 (1971), n. 22 (in its entirety); H. Weinrich, *Literatur für Leser* (Stuttgart 1971).

9:15) − which according to the version in Acts is not known to Paul − the reader knows from the start that the first story (of Paul's conversion to Christianity, Acts 9) already contains the germ of what is fully disclosed in Acts 26: there the 'conversion' vision makes way for a 'missionary' vision. In between the three Damascus stories the text is filled out with Paul's constant peregrinations: he is always 'on the road'. Thus the bare bones of Ananias's vision are filled out topographically with dynamic local content. The journeys are partly impelled by Paul's opponents, the Jews, who turn the former persecutor Saul into the persecuted Paul and want to kill him. In making these journeys Paul is fleeing from town to town; but as a result 'his gospel' is spread all over. Conflict plays an essential role in the process: this, too, Ananias does not mention (in the narrative) to Paul; he realizes it only in the course of his [363] concrete experience of his new way of life. In the structure of the narrative apostolic journeys (escapes), persecution and imprisonment form a complex of events into which the triple account of the Damascus vision is incorporated. A characteristic feature is that the three accounts have a different audience on each occasion. Thus the report itself becomes the Pauline gospel in action, conveying the message to yet another group of people. It is a diagrammatic portrayal,[60] as it were, of the limitless grace characterizing the mission to the gentiles.

To clarify the aim of the following analysis I should say at the outset that, in view of their structure, the three accounts of the 'manifestation' express in words the grace dimension of the events of Paul's historical life. God's saving activity *in* Paul's undertakings is depicted − in advance (Acts 9), in mid course (Acts 22) and towards the end of Paul's life history (Acts 26) − in a purely 'vertical' scheme (a vision). But in this vertical dimension (grace in itself) the substance of the manifestation is remarkably 'empty' or at least extremely meagre; it has to be filled in from the subsequent account of the historical (horizontal) series of events in Paul's actual life. From the first report of a manifestation (Acts 9) and the transformations, omissions and condensations provided in Acts 22 and 26 it is clear that the account as a whole is meant to show that we, the readers, are to interpret 'the vision' as a way of expressing the '*dei*' of salvation history, the 'divine must' or plan of salvation. It is about God's purposive grace manifested *in* Paul's apostolic life, not alongside or beyond it. Paul's life as it actually happened, his journeys and conflicts, must be understood as a divine epiphany through Jesus Christ, disclosing God's plan of salvation which, as experienced and articulated in faith, is 'formalized' (apocalyptically and vertically) in an appearance vision. In the account of that vision God's initiative in all this, his grace, is so to speak extrapolated,

[60] R. Barthes, 'L'analyse structurale du récit a propos d'Actes X-XI', in *Exégèse et herméneutique* (Paris 1971), 202-203.

represented in the model of an (isolated) vertical event. The extrapolation is evident in the 'vacant' character of the manifestation inasmuch as it is not 'filled in' elsewhere (Paul's own life). (The same applies to the attempts in Matthew, Luke and John to fill in the Christ manifestation.)

First of all, the three accounts are laid out in parallel columns to illustrate the adjustments, omissions and concentration.

Account I	***Account II***	***Account III***
Acts 9	***Acts 22***	***Acts 26***
	Paul's Hebrew speech in Jerusalem	*Paul's speech to king Agrippa*
1-2 Paul, persecutor of disciples of 'the Way'	1-5 I am a Jew brought up according to the strict manner and I persecuted 'the Way'	9-11 I, a strict Pharisee, persecuted the Name of Jesus of Nazareth
3-8 *Paul's vision*		
– On the road to Damascus	6-10 As I drew near to Damascus	12-18 On the road to Damascus
	- about noon	13 – at midday
3 – light from heaven shines on Paul	6 – a great light from heaven shone about me	- a light from heaven, brighter than the sun shining round me and my companions
4 – Paul falls to the ground	7 − I fell to the ground and	14 − We fell to the ground
−Voice: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'	heard a voice: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'	A voice spoke to me in Hebrew: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads'
5 Paul: 'Who are you, Lord?'	8 – 'Who are you, Lord?'	15 – 'Who are you, Lord?'
	−'Jesus of Nazareth whom	−'Jesus whom you are
7 - Companions hear voice, see nothing	you are persecuting'	persecuting
	9 − Companions do not hear the voice but see the light	
6 'Rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.'	10 Paul: 'What shall I do, Lord?'	16 But rise and stand upon your feet… for I have appeared to you for this purpose:
	'Rise, and go into Damascus; there you will be told what you have to do'	
8 Paul blind(ed); has to be	11 I could not see because	

led to the city	of the brightness of that light: was led to the city	
9 Does not eat or drink for three days		
10-16 *Ananias's vision* 10 Jesus appears to him: Ananias! − Lord! 11 'Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for Saul of Tarsus; he is just praying'		
Paul's vision 12 (Simultaneously with vv. 10-16) While at prayer Paul sees a vision of a man entering and laying hands on him so he might regain his sight	12 One Ananias, a devout man according to the Law, well spoken of	
13-14 Ananias protests: this persecutor of Christians! 15 'The Lord said, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name"	… came to me and said	
17 So Ananias went to that house and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'	13 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.'	
18 And immediately the scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight	And in that very hour I received my sight and saw him. Ananias said to Paul: 14 'The God of our fathers	*(substance of Jesus' words in Damascus vision)* 'for I have appeared to you

	appointed you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 15 for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard' 16 – 'And now, why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name'	to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the fact that you have seen me and that I will appear to you 17 I have taken you from the people and from the gentiles to whom I send you to open their eyes
and he went at once and was baptized.		18 (a) that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God; and (b) and receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me' 23 (*Sermon continues*:)
19 He ate. *Paul first sermon in Damascus:* 20 'Jesus is the Son of God' 22 'Jesus is the Christ' *Barnabas's account in Jerusalem:* 27 'Paul saw the Lord on the road'		'that the Christ had to suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to the people and to the gentiles.'
	17 (*Paul in Jerusalem*:) Praying in the temple, fell into a trance 18 'I saw him saying to me, "Make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about me"' 19-20 Paul protests: exonerates the behaviour of people whom, after all, he had persecuted 21 Jesus says to him: "Depart; for I will send you far away to the gentiles"	

Between chs 22 and 26:
23:11 'The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified about me at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also at Rome."'

(a) Acts 9: the conversion vision [368]

In this first story three aspects stand out:

(1) Paul is not told the meaning of the vision. At this stage the vision − falling in the already traditional Hellenistic-Jewish category of 'experience of light', a conversion model − is 'empty', even for Paul himself: Saul must set out for Damascus without knowing why; there he will meet with somebody. That is all (9:6). But Ananias, too, has a vision relating to Paul. At first the narrative positions him as antagonistic towards Saul the persecutor (9:13-14), whereupon Paul's conversion is described more vividly as an act of grace. God cuts short Ananias' resistance with a command: 'Go, for this man is a chosen instrument of mine to confess my Name to the gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; I will show him how much he will have to suffer for the sake of my Name' (9:15-16). Ananias does not impart this to Paul − it is meant for the reader; at this point in the story Paul is unaware of the significance of his future Christian ministry. Yet the fact that Paul allows the whole chain of events to take its course and does not resist it means that he accepts what is happening. He fasts for three days and repents.

(2) Another typical feature of the story is the simultaneous visions of Ananias and Paul (9:10-11 and 9:12): as Ananias is being instructed to go to Paul in the street called Straight at Damascus the Lord says: 'behold, he is praying' (9:11b); at the same moment Paul, whilst at prayer, sees in a vision 'a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight' (9:12). This is repeated (9:17-18). What Paul actually experiences, because it is an act of grace, is extrapolated beforehand as a 'vision'. The synchronicity of the two visions (a traditional Greco-Jewish model), arranged by the Lord, tells us that the (presumably historical) meeting between Paul and Ananias[61] is an aspect of salvation history. Thus the structure itself reveals the importance of an interpersonal occurrence at the time of Paul's conversion.

(3) In the vision Jesus addresses Paul personally: 'Saul, why do you persecute

[61] In his letters Paul nowhere alludes to this Ananias.

me?' (9:4), just as Jesus said 'Mary', and she responded, 'Rabboni'. But here things are different: Jesus presents himself as someone Paul does know, namely the Jesus he persecuted. The real Jesus, however, is unknown to Paul, who for that reason asks: 'Who are you, Lord?' (9:5). Paul does not yet know Jesus as the Christ. So Jesus Christ takes the initiative in Paul's conversion, that
[369] is, his recognition of Jesus as the Son and the Christ, as he was to proclaim immediately afterwards (9:20 and 9:22).

The core of the conversion vision, then, is 'meagre', but is full of light symbolism: light, being blinded. The blinding light which completely envelops Paul tells him at once that he was blind in his persecution of Jesus. He must repent, that is, 'fast for three days' (9:9). In the Old and New Testaments 'the third day' (see below) is always the decisive day of repentance and the crucial event;[62] on the third day Paul's decision 'to be converted' becomes final. Ananias's part in this process is to cure Paul of his blindness. He goes to Paul to restore his sight and impart the Spirit (9:17-18). With the laying on of hands 'his sight was restored and he was at once baptized. And he ate' (9:18-19). His blindness removed, he sees Jesus as the Christ (christological confession) and there is no further obstacle to his baptism (see Acts 8:35-36). Paul turns to Jesus as the Christ; this is an act of sheer divine grace. Acts 9 is a conversion vision, not a missionary vision. 'Carrying my Name before the world' (*bastadzein*) does not mean 'to carry forth' but to conduct oneself as one who confesses Christ, even in suffering:[63] Paul is to confess Christ before gentiles, kings (see Acts 4:27) and Jews (Acts 21). According to Ananias's vision that was not disclosed to Paul; Paul is 'a vessel of election' (chosen instrument), that is, called to suffer. Suffering, according to Luke, is an aspect of grace (Acts 5:41; see Lk. 8:13; Acts 14:22): Paul the persecutor now becomes the persecuted confessor of Christ.

As a conversion story Acts 9 goes back to a local Damascus tradition; because of this dependence on a common source the first part of the Damascus story remains more or less unaltered in the three accounts. In itself this first manifestation story has nothing to do with 'Easter appearances' like those to Peter and the eleven. Paul, who at first rejects (persecutes) Jesus, now accepts him. In Jerusalem Barnabas speaks up for Paul: 'He declared to them how on the road he [Paul] had seen the Lord, who spoke to him' (9:27). Luke is intimating that the Damascus vision was indeed 'a seeing of the Lord' − even though Paul did not *see* Jesus, but only heard a voice. Hence in a Christ manifestation it is not necessary actually to perceive Jesus visually.

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[62] 2 Kings 2:17; 2 Chron. 20:25; Ex. 15:22; 2 Macc. 13:12; Lk. 2:46; 24:21; Mk. 8:2; Mt. 15:32.

[63] With Luke *'bastadzein'* usually has the secondary meaning of 'dragging along with' (Lk. 7:14; 10:4; 11:27; 14:27; 22:10; Acts 3:2; 15:10; 21:35); it belongs to the terminology of martyrdom. See Burchard, *Der dreizehnte Zeuge,* 100-101.

(b) Acts 22 [370]

After Acts 9 Paul disappears from Luke's narrative for a while; but from chapter 13 onwards he is the principal figure. In Luke's report of these events he proceeds to fill out Ananias's vision (unknown to Paul), who had already seen Paul as the persecuted confessor of Christ destined to undergo much suffering (9:16). After the first bout of activity (9:20-31), in which Paul 'proclaims Jesus' − that is (see Acts 17:3; 18:5, 28), proclaims him as the Christ (9:22) or in his eschatological function, and as 'Son of God' (9:20), the risen one who sits at God's right hand (see Lk. 22:69) − some Jews are already plotting to kill him (Acts 9:23). The alternation is obvious: the persecutor, Saul, is now the persecuted Paul. When he visits Jerusalem as a convert even the Jewish Christians do not trust him (9:26). The 'Hellenists' in particular want to murder him (9:29).

Between the first and second Damascus stories Paul is on tour, preaching as he goes (Acts 13 to 21). The leading group in the Antiochene church (13:1) decides to commission Barnabas and Paul by laying on of hands, with prayer and fasting, and send them out (13:3). This official commission of Barnabas and Paul as 'apostles', here in the sense of missionaries, is also a special saving act of God; from this point on a divine plan begins to be implemented, to which end Luke again introduces the activity of the Holy Spirit as a 'vertical' dimension: 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them' (13:2). This 'vertical' factor was already implicit in the church's practice of commissioning by liturgical laying on of hands; but Luke underscores its salvation-historical import in a further vision. It marks the beginning of Paul's journey on the path of suffering as one who confesses Christ, but not yet the beginning of his mission to the gentiles. On the contrary, according to Luke, Paul goes about everywhere preaching salvation 'in the synagogues of the Jews' (13:5; 13:14; 17:1-2; 17:10). He himself says: 'Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God [God-fearers = proselytes of Judaism, see 9:43], to us has been sent the message of this salvation' (13:26). 'For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers . . . did not recognize him' (13:27). Nevertheless opposition to Paul intensifies (13:45; 13:50; 14:2-5; 14:19; 17:13; 18:6ff, 21,22). In Luke's view this opposition is what impels Paul towards the gentiles. That this was a gradual process is clear from [371] three elements in Luke's account: (1) In 13:46 Luke has Paul say to the Jews: 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken first to you. But since you thrust it from you ... we turn from now on to the gentiles.' The 'first to the Jews' tallies with Paul's own theology (Rom. 1:16-17; Rom. 9-11; see Rom. 11:26). From this moment on allusions to 'the conversion of the gentiles' become more and more frequent in Acts (13:47, 48); and in his report of his first missionary journey, made to the church at Antioch, Paul is already talking

enthusiastically (Acts 14:27) about 'how he had opened a door of faith to the gentiles'. (2) Much later, while preaching at Corinth, Paul again meets with opposition from Jews, and following on that again says: 'I am innocent. From now on I will go to the gentiles' (18:6). (3) We find this pattern a third time in 28:23-28, at the end of Acts: 'The gentiles, they will listen.' Thus the repetition constitutes a model: according to Luke Paul starts out each time by proclaiming his message to the Jews, but their resistance to it forces him to turn to the gentiles. Yet in 21:19 his apostolate is described as 'Paul's ministry among the gentiles'. Luke, then, sees the Pauline gospel as directed from the very start 'to all men' (17:30), all nations, that is, to Jew and gentile alike, not simply to gentiles. Should the Jews − in this case those of the Diaspora − not accept it, there remain, alas, only the gentiles. According to Luke Paul is the 'apostle of the gentiles' only because of the Jews' self-exclusion (whereas Paul, also with less than complete historical accuracy − see below − sees his mission from the outset as specifically among the gentiles). Since Paul spent about fourteen years working at the behest of the Antiochene church in the Roman province of Syria and Cilicia (with Cyprus and the neighbouring territories of Asia Minor), it seems historically likely that Paul probably did not initially envisage his worldwide apostolic mission. It was occasioned by the decree of the council of Jerusalem and the dispute at Antioch (the separation from Barnabas): 'We should go to the gentiles and they to the circumcised' (Gal. 2:9). Hence Paul's consciousness of being 'an apostle to the gentiles' (Rom. 11:13).
In the middle of this narrative comes chapter 22, in which Paul himself relates his Damascus experience, at any rate in Luke's account.

Paul is arrested in Jerusalem (21:27-38) and the commandant of the barracks is drawn into the affair. Accused of spreading propaganda against the nation, the Law and the temple and of taking gentiles into the temple (21:28), Paul
[372] addresses the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the temple steps in a sort of speech for the defence, in which he emphasizes that he is a Jewish devotee (of God and the Law), admittedly born in Tarsus but nurtured from boyhood 'here in Jerusalem'. Luke has Paul speak in Hebrew (21:40 and 22:2). Although formulated by Luke, this second story has Paul recount his Damascus vision personally, for it has already been 'filled in' with events in Paul's own life. Given Paul's own experiences, Ananias's vision is no longer necessary; as a result of his own experiences Paul is now fully cognizant of God's purpose for him, a persecuted, suffering confessor of Christ. Accordingly this part of the vision (from Acts 9) is left out.

The first part of the vision remains more or less unchanged. Jesus is now referred to as 'of Nazareth', that is, the suffering and crucified one. The healing takes place without mention of laying on of hands; Ananias now acts on his own responsibility, he explains what is going on (22:14). Paul himself has

become more active in the proceedings: 'What shall I do, Lord?' (22:10). He was on his way to Damascus, the notorious Greek-speaking Jew persecuting Christians on the strength of his strict interpretation of the Law, which from his Pharisaic viewpoint included not only the decalogue but the 'laws of the forefathers' (22:3-5). After his conversion, Paul found himself up against the Hebrew-speaking Jews in particular, so he addressed the people in Hebrew. The 'Jewish (Hebrew) − gentile (Greek)' contrast is intentional. In lieu of Ananias's missing vision (from Acts 9) Paul now learns from Ananias (no longer that he came in Jesus' name to cure him of his blindness, but) that he has been chosen 'to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth'; he is to witness to what he has seen and heard (22:14-15). The 'Just One' is the Lord (Acts 22: 13-14 with 9:17), the exalted 'suffering and crucified just one'. The seeing and hearing validate his testimony concerning Jesus to all people, both Jews and gentiles. The seeing relates to the actual Damascus vision, in 22:6-8; and 'hearing a voice from his mouth' (22:14) refers to the voice in 22:17: here we have an interpretation of the Damascus experience as such (not a 'seeing of Jesus', which occurs in a later vision). This interpretation goes beyond both 22:6-11 and 9:3-9. The definition of an apostle in the strict sense is suggested here in typically Lukan terms (see Acts 1:21-22). The point and purpose of the manifestation vision are modified: Paul's de facto apostolic ministry − substantially the same as the apostolate of the twelve − is now (because the first account of the vision has a different function) seen as a gift, commission and [373] salvific dispensation of God in Christ; it is not a self-appointed, autonomous enterprise. Here the Damascus vision becomes the divine, gracious legitimation and ground of Paul's own apostolate to all people, Jew and gentile. Thus the introduction of the vertical but transformed 'vision dimension' affords insight into its nature: that of a divine dispensation and salvific act. Ananias uses the technical Lukan term for 'apostolic election': *proecheirisato se,* God 'has appointed you to ...'. Yet the narrative still ends with Paul's baptism. Structurally, this is important. In this second account the light element is reinforced: 'a fierce light from heaven' (22:6); again it is 'about noon' (22:6); this time Paul's companions do not hear the voice, but now they too see the light (22:9). We are not told that Paul was blind for three days, only: 'I could not see because of the brightness of that light' (22:11). The emphatically spiritual meaning of his blindness in the first story (conversion vision) − blindness to Jesus − now becomes a physical privation, while the spiritual meaning of light and illumination deepens. In other words, it is still a conversion vision, but now serves to substantiate Paul's apostolic mission to all peoples; it is a vision recounted by someone who has experienced Jesus as 'the light of the gentiles'. 'Light of Israel and of the gentiles' is a technical term taken from Hellenistic-Jewish accounts of the conversion of gentiles to

Judaism. The Law is indeed a 'light of the world'.[64] Paul, who sees the Law as replaced by Christ, now encounters Jesus the Christ as light of Israel and of gentiles. In Luke's time (see Lk. 2:32; Acts 13:47; see also Jn. 1:9; 3:19-21; 8:12; Mt. 4:14ff.) Jesus (and the apostles) were described as the light of the gentiles (with reference to Is. 49:6).[65] 'Therefore we turn from now on to the gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying: "I have set you to be a light for the gentiles"' – citing Luke in Acts 13:46-47. This has its consequences for the second presentation of the Damascus vision. By shifting the significance of the light element in Acts 22 Luke links the 'conversion vision' (Acts 9) with the 'missionary vision' or call to apostleship (Acts 26); Acts 22 marks the transition between the two.

(c) Acts 26

Before moving on to the third account of the Damascus event in Acts 26, Luke has Jesus appear to Paul on two occasions − but in a very different sense,
[374] namely, in a trance or while carried away in the spirit (entirely different from the *ôphthè* of the gospel − Jesus makes himself seen, discloses himself). In the same address to the people of Jerusalem Paul says: 'When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me: "Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me"' (22:17-18). But now Paul adopts an opposing role, for he finds the mistrust of himself as the one-time persecutor understandable (22:19-20). Luke is saying that Paul's decision to stay away from Jerusalem was not a high-handed or anti-Jewish resolve of his own, but was divinely legitimated. God's salvific plan (hence the vision) is at work, for it is followed at once by Christ's command: 'Depart; for I will send you far away to the gentiles' (22:21). Paul must go to the non-Jews. This is a new element; so far Paul has been preaching to Jews and non-Jews, to all men. This vision launches Paul on his great missionary journeys. The gentiles converted up to then had apparently been Jewish proselytes. Acts 22:17-21 must be based on some tradition, since Luke would certainly not have invented such a momentous manifestation.[66]

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[64] As end-time prophet and teacher of the Law Jesus is 'light of the world', See Isa. 42:6-7,16; 49:6,8-9; 50:10; 51:4-6; 62:1 with 49:6; Sirach (Eccles.) 48:10b; Acts 1:8b; Lk. 2:32; Jn. 1:8, 9; 3:19-21; 8:12. Also Paralip. Jer. 6:9, 12; *Joseph and Asenath,* p. 46; especially pseudo-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum* 51:4-6; Test. Levi 14:3-4; Test. Zabulon 9:8; Test. Benjamin 10:2. For the apostles: Acts 13:47; Mt. 5:14. See also Kl. Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 27.

[65] In the oldest liturgies the idea of the 'light of the gentiles' also comes to be associated with Christian baptism, which is itself described as 'illumination'.

[66] According to H. Conzelmann we have here a rival variant of the Damascus event *(Die Apostelgeschichte,* Tübingen 1963, 126). According to Chr. Burchard, *Dir dreizehnte Zeuge,* 161-168, it refers to another incident, localized in Jerusalem; it is *there* that Paul is called to be an apostle *of the gentiles.* This is in any case non-Pauline; Paul is aware from the very start of being called to the

Acts 23:11 recounts yet another 'Jesus vision'. Paul, arrested in Jerusalem, has won his case in the Sanhedrin by playing off Pharisees and Sadducees against each other on the issue of the resurrection; but in the barracks' prison that night he experiences a manifestation: 'The Lord stood by him and said: "Take courage, for as you have testified about me at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also at Rome" ' (23:11). As a prisoner but also a Roman citizen Paul will indeed lodge an appeal with the emperor in Rome (25:11b). Had he not done so, Luke tells us, he would have been released: 'This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar,' (26:32) says king Agrippa II to governor Festus. Luke evidently wants to emphasize that this was not Paul's decision, but that he was destined to proclaim the gospel even in Rome in accordance with God's plan of salvation. (Acts concludes with Paul actually preaching in Rome.) The tradition of this Pauline vision, analogous with a scriptural proof, is again meant to underline the salvation character of a historical event.

Then, for a third time, comes the Damascus story (Acts 20). Paul is a prisoner at Caesarea. King Agrippa and the governor, Festus, interest themselves in his case, so Paul has an opportunity to make Ananias's vision (9:15) come true: the gospel is brought before kings. The third story is cast in the form of a speech by [375]
Paul addressed to king Agrippa. This time the Damascus story is amplified with an account of Paul's whole life (Acts 13 to 26). The conversion vision fades completely into the background; Paul's baptism is not even mentioned. The conversion is reduced to the constant refrain in the three stories: 'Saul, why do you persecute me?' To that is appended a proverb: 'It hurts you to kick against the goads' (26:14-15). In this account the Jesus persecutor, Paul, is called through a vision of Christ to become Christ's apostle to the gentiles. Ananias vanishes completely from the story; after all, it is no longer about Paul's conversion. His baptism drops out of the story, but is replaced by the baptism of the gentiles, although this is merely suggested by a further intensification of the light element: 'a light from heaven, brighter than the sun', 'at midday' (26:13); it shines not only around Paul but around all his companions; this time they all prostrate themselves (26:14), but Paul alone hears a voice speaking to him 'in the Hebrew language' (26:14). What this Hebrew-speaking voice says is important structurally; for it is nothing less than Paul's gospel for the non-Hebrews, the gentiles. Now the manifesting Jesus himself declares to what purpose 'he has made himself seen'; here at last we find the Easter term *ôphthè*. This third story says nothing about Paul's being blind or blinded, as in 9:17, 27 and 22:14. Jesus appears to Paul 'for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the fact that you have

gentiles. This tradition does, of course, concede *that* Paul is the apostle of the gentiles.

seen me and that I will appear to you' (26:16). The 'will appear' is a reference to the Jesus visions of 22:17-18 and 23:11 (in his letters Paul says nothing about them). Being appointed *hupèretès* (a servant) and *martur* (a witness) no longer refers to a conversion vision but to a call vision. By using these technical terms Luke is conveying his own apostolic conception of the twelve (see Lk. 1:2: eyewitnesses and ministers of the word) − a company, however, to which Paul does not belong. Acts 26:16b expresses the core of the Lukan idea of the apostolate: by virtue of being elected by the risen one himself, Paul, like the twelve, acquires a mission of his own (Lk. 24:48; Acts 1:8,22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39,41; 13:31; 22:15; 26:16). The new fellowship with Jesus from his baptism to his ascension (Acts 1:21-22) is not sufficient; authentic apostolate requires special election by the risen one (a vision in which the call and the missionary mandate are given); being a witness to the risen one is the constitutive element of Luke's notion of apostleship. Thus Paul has what is essential for an apostle,
[376] without however belonging to the inner circle of the twelve.

Christ has 'taken' Paul, that is, delivered him from dangers posed by Jew and gentile (26:17);[67] this refers to Christ's support in all Paul's activities throughout his life. According to this third Damascus story he is sent 'to open the eyes of the gentiles'; the blindness or blinding that has to be cured is no longer his own but that of the gentiles: (a) 'that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God', and (b) 'that by faith in me they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified' (26: 17-18). Preaching (opening eyes; see Lk. 9:3), faith (turning around), and baptism (forgiveness of sins and incorporation into the fellowship of saints) are three technical terms of the conversion, now no longer of Paul but of the gentiles. 'Turning from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God' is a Hellenistic-Jewish formula denoting conversion of gentiles to Judaism;[68] it indicates conversion to the monotheism of Israel's God. The expression 'place among those who are sanctified', too, is Hellenistic-Jewish; it was adopted by the second generation of Christians to denote incorporation into the church as the congregation of God.[69]

The import of the vision now lies in the christological affirmation that Jesus of Nazareth is 'the light of the people and of the gentiles' (26:23); the Christian meaning of baptism is also explained: it is an action signifying ethico-religious conversion, but at the same time a 'light vision' which mediates knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent, and incorporates the convert into the *ekklesia* comprising Jews and gentiles. Finally, the Damascus vision is filled out with the baptismal theology of the Lukan church.

[67] See Acts 7:10-34; 12:11; 23:27; 26:17; Gal. 1:4.
[68] See 1 Thess. 1:9; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9.
[69] See also Acts 20:32; cf. Eph. 1:18; Col. 1:12.

In the first story it became clear to Ananias in a vision that Paul had been chosen 'to suffer many things'; in the third story the roles are reversed in masterly fashion when Luke has Paul say: I have said 'nothing but ... that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to the people [Israel] and to the gentiles' (26:23). Paul's whole life, says Luke, consisted simply in following the suffering Jesus; partly through his own living and suffering he proclaimed the crucified-and-risen one as the light of all peoples.

Luke's argument emerges from the three stories taken together: both factually and chronologically Paul's mission to the gentiles is distinct from his conversion and initial calling. Luke puts the emphasis on a church comprising Jews and gentiles, not on a church comprising gentiles only. But this call is [377] frustrated because the Jews of the Diaspora spurn Paul's preaching; hence the necessity to turn to the gentiles (13:44-48; 18:5-7; 28:23-28). According to Luke the mission to the gentiles was Paul's personal cause;[70] thus there emerged a church of gentiles without any Jews.

Acts 26:12-18, then, is constructed quite differently from Acts 9 and 22; what is reported here is a genuine 'Easter appearance' in the same sense as the formal, official appearances of Christ to Peter and the eleven. Acts 9 derives from a local Damascus tradition with some Lukan redaction; there is no mention of an 'Easter appearance', only an *optasia,* a vision; Acts 26 is elaborating on a different tradition, which suggests that in this case Luke was presented with an already extant, authentic Pauline tradition: Paul's Damascus vision is an 'Easter appearance', theologically underlying and legitimating Paul's mission as an apostle to the gentiles; it is an ecclesial 'vocation vision', like that of Peter and the eleven. That is how Paul himself understood it, judging by his letters (1 Cor. 15:3-5), whereas for Luke Paul was called to be an apostle to all, Jew and gentile alike; the fact that he became the apostle of the gentiles was a historic turn in his life, for which the Jews were responsible. In Acts 26, to some extent contrary to his own views, Luke (being tied to an already existing tradition) presents a picture of an authentic apostle Paul.[71] Luke is drawing on a tradition which gives a different interpretation of the Damascus event from the one on which Acts 9 is based.[72] Paul is indeed a convert, yet he himself sees his Damascus experience not as the occasion of his conversion but (albeit many years afterwards!) as his appointment (by the risen one) to be the apostle of the gentiles (see 1 Cor. 15:3-5). The tradition underlying Acts 9 is less ancient than that underlying Acts 26; it assumes a

[70] Chr. Burchard, *Der dreizehnte Zeuge,* 166-167.

[71] Cf. Acts 26:10-11 with Gal. 1:12-13; Acts 26:6 with Gal. 1:14; Acts 26:7 with Gal. 1:16; Acts 26:18 with Gal. 1:16.

[72] Furthermore Acts 26 is in the so-called 'we-sections' of the Acts.

hagiographical concern with the person of the great apostle, a church subject to the authority of the suffering apostle Paul, now looking back on the completed course of his life.[73] In the post-Pauline period reports of Paul's conversion were circulating in Damascus; in 1 Tim. 1:12ff that event becomes the paradigm of the pardoning of a sinner.[74] Luke, then, adopted two different traditions and fashioned them into the text of Acts with consummate literary and theological expertise.

When Paul eventually ends up in Rome he preaches the gospel there as well:
[378] 'Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the gentiles; they will listen' (28:28). Throughout his narrative the Hellenist Christian Luke wrote with this verse in prospect; and in the process he sketched the topography − endorsed by divine sanction, calling and salvific dispensation (visions) − of Paul's propagation of the message of God's reign, given its concrete shape in Jesus, the crucified-and-risen one.

In Gal. 1:15-16 Paul himself sees his life as a dispensation of grace: '. . . then he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the gentiles . . .' (Gal. 1:15-16). In Paul's own words he experienced his calling to the apostolate of the christological confession as a merciful act or revelation of God. Is Paul's self-understanding (which clearly distinguishes a christological 'seeing of Jesus' from various kinds of visions, 'seeings' and revelations in a state of rapture or trance; see 2 Cor. 12:1-4) not essentially what Luke reports, the grace dimension of what took place being expressed in a vision? For in all the variants in the three accounts there is one, often forgotten, fundamentally constant datum: the purpose of what occurs is invariably concealed from Paul's companions;[75] a Jesus appearance is not an object of neutral observation; it is a religious experience in response to an eschatological disclosure, expressed in a christological affirmation of Jesus as the risen one, that is, a disclosure of and faith in Jesus and his eschatological, christological significance. This was also the core of all other appearances of Christ, which have subsequently been filled out either with the theology of the communities represented by Matthew, Luke and John or with the historical ministry of the apostle Paul. At Jerusalem Barnabas describes the Damascus event as Paul 'seeing' Jesus (Acts 9:27), although Paul did not see Jesus visually at all; and Paul himself equates this seeing with the official appearances of Christ to Peter and the twelve (1 Cor. 15:3-5). 'Seeing' Jesus is a christological seeing: an understanding of Jesus as the Christ − made possible by grace alone − in a

[73] See Burchard, l.c., 126-127.
[74] The notion of the suffering apostle (Acts 9:15-16) is post-Pauline (Col. 1:24; Eph. 3:1,13; 2 Tim. 3:11-12).
[75] R. Fuller, *Resurrection narratives,* 46, rightly emphasizes this.

personal experience that orients the whole life of the one who undergoes it; but this experience is not called an 'official' manifestation of Christ unless and until it constitutes the basis of an apostolic mission.

It is remarkable that in Acts an 'Easter' missionary vision developed out of a conversion vision (Acts 9 and 22). To start seeing Jesus as the Christ indeed calls for conversion and illumination. The next question is whether in the [379] course of the first few Christian generations the tradition of the appearance of Christ to Simon and the eleven did not undergo the same sort of development, growth and structuring that we detect when we compare Acts 9, 22 and 26.

Chapter 3

THE EASTER EXPERIENCE: BEING CONVERTED, AT JESUS' INITIATIVE, TO JESUS AS THE CHRIST − SALVATION FOUND CONCLUSIVELY IN JESUS

Literature as in this part (Part Two, section III, ch. 1: 'The disciples scandalized by the arrest and death of Jesus'). Further: J. Blank, 'The position and office of Peter in the New Testament', Conc. 9 (1973), Vol. 3, 42-55; K. Carroll, 'Thou art Peter', NovT 6 (1963), 268-276; H. Conzelmann, 'Zur Analyse der Bekenntnisformel 1 Kor. 15:3-5', EvTh 25 (1965), 1-11; O. Cullmann, *Petrus, Jünger, Apostel, Martyrer* (Zürich-Stuttgart 1960[2]); J. Dupont, 'Le nom d'apôtres a-t-il été donné aux Douze par Jésus?', OrSyr 1 (1956), 278-280, also (same title): Louvain 1956, and 'La révélation du Fils de Dieu en faveur de Pierre (Mt. 16:17) et de Paul (Gal. 1:16)', RSR 52 (1964), 411-420; R. Fuller, ' "Thou art Peter" pericope and the Easter appearances', *McCormick Quarterly* 20 (1967), 309-315; F. Gils, 'Pierre et la foi au Christ ressuscité', ETL 38 (1962), 5-43; G. Klein, 'Die Berufung des Petrus', ZNW 58 (1967), 1-44; R. Pesch, 'The position and significance of Peter in the church of the New Testament', Conc. 7 (1971), Vol. 4, 21-35; J. Roloff, *Apostolat, Verkündigung, Kirche* (Gütersloh 1965); W. Trilling, 'Zum Petrusamt im Neuen Testament', ThQ 151 (1971), 110-133; A. Vögtle, 'Messiasbekenntnis und Petrusverheissung', BZ 1 252-272 and 2 (1958), 85-103.

§1 An account of some converts. A Jewish conversion model ? [380]

The question raised above but left unanswered was: what brought the disciples who had left Jesus in the lurch at the time of his arrest and crucifixion together again − now in the name of Jesus, acknowledged as the Christ, Son of God, the

Lord? We posited as a working hypothesis that there was a connection between the scattering of the disciples and their so called 'Easter experience', being the reason for their coming together again. In other words, did the Easter manifestation of Christ not derive from what we might call a Christian conversion vision?

Both the outcome and the starting point are important here. On the one hand the group of intimate disciples disintegrates because they have betrayed the cohesive force that kept them together, the person of Jesus of Nazareth; on the other hand, reassembled in Jesus' name, they proclaim, a while after Jesus' death, that this same Jesus has risen. What occurred in the period between their master's suffering and death and the disciples' panic-stricken loss of nerve on the one hand and, on the other, the moment when they boldly and confidently proclaimed that Jesus was to return to judge the world or had risen from the dead? Even the historian must face up to the problem: something must surely have happened to make this transformation at any rate psychologically intelligible.

The first, immediate answer cannot be: the reality of the resurrection itself. The resurrection, the eschatological 'event', is not recounted anywhere in the New Testament; nor could it be, because it was not part of earthly, human history; its reality is meta-empirical and meta-historical: 'eschatological'. On the other hand, a resurrection about which nothing is said is an event about which nobody knows anything, hence for us 'nonexistent'. Introducing the subject of a meta-historical resurrection, as the New Testament does, presupposes experiential events interpreted as God's saving acts in Christ. It presupposes a particular experience and an interpretation of it. The question then becomes: after Jesus' death, what concrete, experienced events induced the disciples to proclaim their testimony and summons to Jesus of Nazareth as one who is actually alive: the coming or risen one? If it cannot be the
[381] resurrection itself, or the empty tomb (even if this were a historical fact, theologically it would be no proof of a resurrection. A 'vanished corpse' is not in itself a resurrection, and an actual bodily resurrection does not necessarily result in a vanished corpse), or stories about appearances that in themselves presuppose belief in the resurrection − then, what?

Anyone who was initially scandalized by Jesus and subsequently proclaimed him to be the only bringer of salvation must have undergone a 'conversion process'. A first answer to the question of what actually took place between the two historical events − Jesus' death and the apostles' preaching – must therefore be: the conversion of the disciples, who 'notwithstanding' Jesus' scandalous death reassembled − and did so in the name of this same Jesus, acknowledging their lack of faith. A conversion process intervened between the two historically accessible elements. Only then can we inquire into the

circumstances that made the conversion possible, and more especially the prerequisites for such a development. To my mind a straight exegesis of the empty tomb and the appearance stories fails to answer this primary, fundamental question of the conversion or reassembling of the disciples. Accordingly the first section of this chapter deals with the problem posed by the outrage felt by the disciples and their reassembling. The core events are contained in the biblical accounts of the Christ appearances, but are overlaid by later experiences of what was by then an established church, on which the four gospels and Acts were based. Can the threefold Damascus story − in which the Christ manifestation to Paul is depicted first as a conversion vision and then as a missionary vision – serve as a model for understanding a similar development in the tradition of the official appearances of Christ to the twelve? To be sure, there is a fundamental difference: the disciples had not been persecutors of Jesus − quite the opposite; they had fallen short in their discipleship, but in the New Testament this would seem to be the essential requirement of being a Christian. Hence they are in need of conversion: to resume their discipleship and follow Jesus once more. But the first condition for that is the experience of receiving forgiveness from Jesus − a quite specific experience of grace, as a result of which they are restored to fellowship with Jesus and confess him as their ultimate salvation that did not end with his death and through which they were reassembled in fellowship with him and each other. [382]

In some modern attempts to make the manifestation experience intelligible the appearances of Christ are seen as a sort of condensation of various pneumatic experiences in the early church. The basic error here is that one is postulating what has to be demonstrated. In fact, one is presupposing the existence of an 'assembled church' (in which the pneumatic experiences occur), whereas the reality that the appearance traditions in the gospels are meant to signify marks the start of the assembling of the scattered disciples, in other words, the very first foundational event in the church (albeit at that stage still a fraternity within the Jewish religion). It is this reassembly of the disciples that has to be explained. Appearance stories and accounts of the holy sepulchre presuppose the existence of the reassembled church and its christological kerygma.

We must therefore look into the conversion process of the disciples. Fundamentally conversion entails a relationship (a) with him whom the disciples had let down: Jesus of Nazareth, and (b) with him to whom they return: Jesus the Christ.

The disciples (probably in panic) failed in their discipleship or following of Jesus: at what was for him the very worst moment they left him in the lurch. That was when they showed their lack of faith − something against which

Jesus had repeatedly warned them. Yet their relationship with Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had deserted, included their recollection of his entire ministry, his message of the coming reign of God, a God mindful of mankind, who wills only the wellbeing and not the downfall of men; of his admonitions about lack of faith; but they had also come to know the 'God of Jesus' as a God of unconditional mercy and forgiveness; he had helped so many people simply because they came to him in distress; they remembered Jesus' eating and drinking in fellowship with sinners, that is, offering salvation to sinners in particular. Finally there was their recollection of the very special mood prevailing at the farewell meal − memories of what Jesus had said at the time, however vague. These remembered aspects of their life in fellowship with Jesus and of Jesus' ministry are essential elements of the conversion process undergone by these men who did indeed fail, but in the end had not lost their faith in Jesus. They had been thrown off balance rather than been deliberately unfaithful.

[383] Their relationship with the one to whom they have returned, on the other hand, is altogether new. They deserted a Jesus marked down for death; they return to fellowship here and now with that same Jesus, acknowledged now as the returning judge or the crucified-and-risen one. This second relationship is pertinent to the origin of the appearance traditions in the gospels. What historical occurrences were experienced by the disciples as acts of sheer divine grace, which brought them to the christological confession of the risen or coming crucified one?

In Part Three it will appear that on the basis of Is. 42:6-7, 16; 49:6, 8-9; 50:10; 51:4-6; 62:1 with 49:6, the end-time prophet was characterized in Judaism as 'the light of the world', just as the Law was 'the light of all nations'; there it will also be seen that the identification of Jesus with the eschatological emissary from God was the bridge between Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ proclaimed by the church. This idea of the eschatological prophet (with the whole spectrum of meaning it evoked in Judaism) also played a part in the emergence of the appearance traditions. In Jewish conversion stories the conversion of a gentile to the Jewish law is often called an illumination and is depicted in terms of what has become the classic model of a conversion vision: the person is suddenly surrounded with brilliant light and hears a voice (Acts 9; Paul's Damascus vision was clearly constructed according to this model). Is. 29:9-10,18; 35:5; 42:18-21 and 43:8 gave rise to a recurrent theme in Judaism, in which 'not seeing' or a state of blindness becomes a symbol for wrongfully cutting oneself off from God's revelation; 'seeing', on the other hand, symbolizes entry into the salvation offered by God (see also Deut. 29:4; Is. 6:9; 42:6-7; 56:10; 59:10; Jer. 5:21). Mark 4:12 is referring to Is. 6:9-10, when it says 'so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not

understand; otherwise they might turn to God and be forgiven'. More particularly, in Hellenistic Judaism a common term (deriving from Is. 42:6-7) for a gentile's conversion to Judaism is the 'seeing' or 'enlightenment' of one who was previously blind.[1] The symbolism of light, and thus of seeing, is associated with conversion in many New Testament passages (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:8-14; 1 Pet. 2:9-12; Heb. 6:4; 10:32). In Acts 26:17-18 there are clear traces of 'Isaiahan' influence (Is. 42:7); Paul's conversion is depicted according to the light model of a conversion vision. Although Christian baptism and conversion [384] or illumination frequently coincide (later on baptism itself was described as *phôtismos,* illumination), the two terms are not identical. 'You are the light of the world' (Mt. 5:14; Lk. 8:16) was applied initially to the eschatological prophet (Is. 42:6-7; 49:6,8-9; 51:4-6; 62:1 with 49:6; also Sirach 48:10b), in Judaism to the Torah.[2] Elsewhere the term 'light of the gentiles' or 'of the world' (first for the Jews, but including all pagans) occurs frequently.[3] It is also applied both to Jesus (Jn. 1:9; 3:19-21; 8:12) and to Christ's apostles (Acts 13:47; 26:23; Mt. 5:14; Lk. 8:16). The same approach clearly influenced 'light' texts such as 1 Thess. 5:1-6 and 1 Pet. 2:9-12 (in other words, Christian catechesis). Given this existing Jewish tradition of conversion via illumination (frequently portrayed as a light vision), the surmise − or the possibility – arises that the marvellous occurrence of a conversion, not to God's revelation in the Law but to his revelation in Jesus, was constructed on the model of a conversion vision, which in essence signifies a divine revelation, epiphany and hence 'enlightenment'. Acts 9, Luke's version of the story of Paul's conversion, is a clear example of this. Even the 'baptismal vision' in the interpretive traditions about Jesus' baptism in the Jordan belongs to a similar tradition complex (as far as the model employed is concerned); there Jesus appears as 'light of the world' and end-time prophet: an epiphany of Jesus as Son of God.

What happens in the Christian resurrection vision (the Easter appearances) is a conversion to Jesus as the Christ, who now comes as the light of the world.[4] Just as enlightenment by the Law justifies a person (see Gal. 1:14; 3:2ff), so the disciples are justified by the illumination of the risen one. In the manifestation or vision the gracious gift of conversion to Jesus *as* the Christ (through an enlightening divine revelation) is accomplished and expressed. It is Jesus

[1] Wis. 18:4 ('the imperishable light of the Law which was to be given to the world'); Test. Levi 18:3,9; 1QH 4:27.

[2] Test. Levi 14:3; 18:3,9; Test. Benjamin 10:2; 1QH 4:27; cf. Jn. 1:8; Mt. 5:3.

[3] Paral. Jer. 6:9, 12; *Joseph and Asenath,* p. 46:18-19; 47:1-2; pseudo-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum biblicarum,* 51:4-6; Test. Zabulon, 51:4-6. In the New Testament: Acts 1:8b; Lk. 2:32; Jn. 1:9; 3:19-21; 8:12. See W. Kauck, *Die Tradition und der Charakter des ersten Jobannesbrief* (Tübingen 1957); Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 119-121; Kl. Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 27-28.

[4] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 27, rightly says that the function of the end-time prophet as 'light of the gentiles' in Judaism is the key to a series of so far unelucidated central issues in early Christianity. His much heralded study on this subject is unfortunately not yet available.

himself who enlightens, who discloses himself as the risen Christ in and through the grace of conversion: he is the enlightening Christ; he 'makes himself seen'.

Remarkably, the New Testament appearance stories (apart from Acts) make no mention of 'light'; that might be considered a contradiction of the proposed interpretation. Yet, equally remarkably, the accounts of appearances in the four gospels clearly feature the standard terminology of (a) a 'sending forth into the world' (thus 'light of the world'), and (b) explicit or descriptive references to Christian baptism (forgiveness of sins); the Jewish conversion model is clearly
[385] recognizable in all this. It must be pointed out that of the original 'epiphany' character of the appearances in the gospels (independently of all 'illumination' or 'enlightenment' phenomena) only the identification remains: Jesus is the living one. (I shall come back to this in Part Three.)

§2 Jesus' disciples reassembled at the historical initiative of Peter

The early church saw commitment to Jesus as conversion.[5] This conversion was frequently portrayed as a Jewish conversion vision, which in the early church gradually turned into a missionary vision. Do the missionary appearances in the gospels enable us to visualize their primary source, the 'conversion vision' of Simon and the twelve?

The events underlying the earliest testimonies to the faith by Peter and his following have manifestly been overlaid in the course of the earliest Christian traditions by interpretations from Matthean theology (Mt. 28:9-10 and 16:20), Lukan theology (Lk. 24:13-35,44-53), Johannine theology (especially Jn. 20:17-18; 20:21b and even 20:24-31), and by Paul's personal experiences. They already contain the core of a reflexive ecclesiology. The matrix account of the appearances is no longer recoverable from the mingling of tradition and redaction. The appearance stories in the gospels no longer tell us about the initial conversion to Jesus as the risen one but about the ground and source of the one faith of the by then established church of Christ. The existence of this Christ-confessing church is presupposed. In the gospel account the apostles had already assembled *before* the appearances, apparently in expectation of things to come. John evidently saw the problem; so his gospel says that the disciples were gathered together behind lock and bolt 'for fear of the Jews' (Jn. 20:19). Even the appearance to Simon, clearly an important one in the New Testament, gets only a bald mention (Lk. 24:34), while the dynamic thrust of the narrative focuses on the manifestation to the eleven as a group: to the

[5] All the Jewish *topoi* of a gentile's conversion to the Jewish law were taken over by Christianity. The convert starts by giving alms, even by giving away all his possessions, but he will recover them a hundredfold: Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 29-30.

entire assembly. This makes it clear that the communal, 'ecclesial' christological confession of the crucified-and-risen one is the sole norm of the apostolic faith.

Thus the New Testament account of the Christ appearances gives us no direct historical information as to how the disciples, initially scattered after [386] Jesus' death,[6] were gathered together again in the name of their deceased master, and in such a manner that it brought the Christ movement into being. These stories plainly concern the grounds and legitimation of the church's mission to the whole world. Such accounts in the gospels reflect the church's self-understanding: the local congregations of Christ see themselves as grounded in, and sent into the world by virtue of, their faith in the risen, living Jesus.

Although products of already established churches, the gospel narratives reflect the recollection of something that happened, a historical occurrence that provided a basis for Jesus' disciples to reassemble after his death in the name of Jesus as the Christ, the definitive salvation. I shall try to retrieve this memory still at work in the gospel stories, although the difficulty of disentangling tradition and redaction and determining their primary source will only permit probable and reasonable hypotheses, albeit founded on discernible signs in the gospel texts.

Hence the question of how and on the basis of what experiences and recollections the disciples reassemble after Jesus' death around the nonetheless deceased Jesus takes us back to the point at which the disciples − not yet a 'church of Christ' − constituted themselves as a Christian community (even if initially within Judaism).[7]

In pursuing this inquiry we assume the likelihood that Jesus' intimate disciples failed in one way or another to stand by him during his arrest and at his death. We must also take into account that during Jesus' lifetime it was impossible to establish an essential, constitutive connection between his *person* – not just one or more of his deeds − with the coming of God's reign. After all, as long as Jesus was living in human history, which is ipso facto contingent, God's saving revelation in him was 'unfinished' − still in a process of coming

[6] The sources are imprecise about the disciples having fled to Galilee and having afterwards returned to Jerusalem. (It therefore remains historically arguable that the 'Galilean appearances' are the earliest; certainly, the appearance traditions refer to a Galilean origin.) It is another thing, however, to see 'the twelve' as having already been brought together (awaiting, as it were, news of 'appearances') *before* their experience of what the New Testament calls 'Christ appearances'! See the argument about this: Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 205-206; H. Grasz, *Ostergeschehen,* 128-129; H. Conzelmann, 'Zur analyse der Bekenntnisformel', l.c., 8, n. 49; K. Lehmann, *Am dritten Tag,* 162.

[7] Despite all sorts of fortuitous circumstances which helped to bring about the rift between Christianity and Jewry, the primitive Christian identification of Jesus with the 'light of the gentiles', instead of the Law as the 'light of the world', was *germinally* a breach with Judaic Jewry, and in essence, therefore, the founding of the '*ecclesia Christi'* as an *ecclesia* of Jews *and* gentiles.

to be. At that stage, therefore, 'Christology' was out of the question; for a christological confession is a (religious) statement about the totality of Jesus' life, not about salvific power attributed to particular sayings or actions; that was certainly obvious to his disciples, even prior to his death. If one accepts the actual historicity of God's revelation in Jesus and sees how the faith of his disciples responded to these temporal events − Jesus' entire ministry − one realizes that the disciples were incredibly enthusiastic about their master, in
[387] the context of their fundamental relationship to God, but had not yet come to recognize that his person was of constitutive, all-decisive significance for the dawning of God's kingdom. The whole point of a christological affirmation − if words still have their proper meaning − lies in the acknowledgment of that constitutive significance. The reason why, prior to Jesus' death, an implicit 'christological confession' (in its full christological sense) was impossible is, in my view, the genuine historicity − again any kind of docetism is out of place − of Jesus' self-understanding and of his message, which gradually made him realize the inevitability of a violent death. The Christian disclosure experience, ground, source and articulation of a truly christological confession of Jesus, presupposes the totality of his life, up to and including its end in his execution. Theologically, too, only this completed life is God's revelation in Jesus of Nazareth. Only with Jesus' death his life story − insofar as his 'person' is concerned – comes to an end; only then can our account of Jesus begin.

Of course the disciples experienced the violent end of their master's life as a tremendous shock and, understandably, their faith wavered and they panicked; but the new developments did not cause a total lapse of faith. Apart from Mark, who (for reasons in my view not yet satisfactorily explained) is keenly critical of the conduct of the twelve prior to Jesus' death, the gospels do not represent the disciples' panicky defection and desertion of Jesus as a total breach in the sense of apostasy. It was *oligopistia* − 'being of little faith' (see above). These disciples did of course come to realize − in a process of repentance and conversion which can no longer be reconstructed historically − something of the overwhelming nature of their disclosure experience: their 'recognition' and 'acknowledgment' of Jesus in the totality of his life. This is what I call the Easter experience, which could be expressed in a variety of ways: the crucified one is the coming judge (a *maranatha* Christology); the crucified one as miracle worker is actively present in his disciples; the crucified one has risen. And then we may indeed say: at that juncture they at last experienced really seeing Jesus − the basis of what the Easter appearances tell us: Jesus 'made himself seen' (*ôphthè*); not until after his death did he become 'epiphanous', that is, transparent; it is through faith that we grasp who he is. The disciples' acknowledgment is both a recognition and a new vision of Jesus − of Jesus of Nazareth, not someone different, nor a myth. Jesus as they knew

him remained the sole criterion of their memories as well as their new experiences after his death. [388]

Historically it is probable (and accepted more or less universally by present-day exegetes) that (apart from the appearances to women, who in ancient, primarily Jewish culture could not offer any valid testimony) the first manifestation of Jesus was to Simon Peter (1 Cor. 15:5; Lk. 24:34; and, indirectly, Mk. 16:7),[8] that is, he was the first to experience what the New Testament calls a 'seeing of Jesus' after his death. This correlates with the Markan tradition (or more probably redaction), which, in the midst of the shock and dismay felt by all the disciples, attributes an individual denial of Jesus to Simon alone. In the Markan redaction this is interpreted in salvation-historical terms as a 'divine must' or salvific design, in that Mark quotes a scriptural passage at this point and puts it directly into Jesus' mouth (Mk. 14:27; see the connection made by Mark between Mk. 14:27 and 14:28 with Mk. 16:7).

There are also strong indications (observed by many exegetes) that the name 'Cephas', Peter or rock, given to Simon was linked with his position as the first recipient of a Christ appearance. Apropos this first official/hierarchical appearance Luke for once calls Peter Simon: 'he ... has appeared to Simon' (Lk. 24:34); elsewhere he usually speaks of 'Peter'. B. Gerhardson has shown[9] (with the backing of many other commentators) that it is 'extremely probable' that Mt. 16:17-19 stems from a (now lost) tradition which tells of Jesus' first appearance specifically to Peter. Albeit with some fundamental corrections, A. Vögtle,[10] too, sees Mt. 16:18-19 as a fragment which originally formed part of an account of a first appearance to Peter (although he denies that a christological confession by Peter was associated with this account of this official appearance). An important point is that A. Vögtle also recognizes that the Jesus logion in Matthew, 'You are Peter (rock)', is the first time Simon is called by that name, and that the name was certainly not given to Simon by the earthly Jesus.[11] Many exegetes regard the association between the designation 'rock' and the first appearance to Peter as the best hypothesis.[12] The pre-Pauline use of Peter instead of Simon points to an already established tradition quite soon after Jesus' death.

Notwithstanding Peter's focal position, partly as a result of Jesus' first appearance to Simon, the gospels refer to this appearance only in close association with the appearance of Christ to the eleven (Lk. 24:34 with 24:36; 1

[8] H. Conzelmann, *Geschichte des Urchristentums.* 27-28; Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 72, 114; Fuller, *Resurrection narratives,* 57-58.
[9] *Memory and manuscript* (Uppsala. 1961), 266-271.
[10] 'Zum Problem der Herkunft von Mt. 16:17-19', in *Orientierung an Jesus,* l.c., 372-393.
[11] L.c., 382.
[12] See the literature above.

Cor. 15:3-5).

[389] There is yet another striking feature in Acts that might be relevant in this context. Acts 1:4 refers to *sunalidzomenos,* often translated as 'while he was eating with them' (i.e. after his resurrection). But at about the same time the Jewish author Josephus uses the same word, once in the 'middle voice': 'to assemble (themselves)', and once in the active: 'to assemble'.[13] Here Luke may be reflecting a tradition which says that after his death Jesus, the Lord, reassembled his disciples and commanded them 'not to leave Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father [the Spirit]... (John baptized with water but you shall be baptized with the holy Spirit before many days)' (Acts 1:4-5). The Lukan theology in this is evident enough; but it articulates a tradition that ascribes the initiative for the reassembly to the risen Jesus himself − as the 'grace aspect' of a historical event.

The foregoing data give us reasonable grounds for postulating that after Jesus' death Peter was the first (male) disciple to be 'converted' and to resume 'following Jesus', followed by other disciples acting on his initiative. Hence Peter is the first Christian confessor to arrive at a christological affirmation; by virtue of his conversion he takes the initiative in assembling a (or the) 'group of twelve' (whether known by that name already or not; see below). That is how he became the rock of the original core Christian community, 'the twelve' who acknowledged Jesus as the coming or risen 'crucified one', that is, the community of the last days, the final aeon, the new kingdom of the twelve tribes, the gathered 'church of Christ' (Rom. 16:16) or 'church of God' (1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; etc.). This, we may suppose, is the historical core of the process that brought about the reassembling of Jesus' disciples as the church of Christ. Very probably Peter was not himself the founder of 'the twelve': more likely the group was already in existence before Easter (how otherwise could Judas Iscariot be called 'one of the twelve', and − more particularly − how do we explain the technical term 'the eleven'?). It seems likely that Jesus' pre-Easter commissioning of the disciples to go on their mission constituted the group of twelve. Hence it was a consequence of Jesus' first appearance that Peter was given the credit for reassembling the group.[14] To my mind Lk. 22:32 echoes a recollection of this historical event: 'Simon, Simon ... when you have turned again [*epistrepsas:* converted], strengthen your brethren' (in this complex, Lk. 22:31-33, the use of 'Simon' is striking). It forges a link between Peter's denial,

[390] his conversion and his initiative in reassembling the disciples, confirming them as disciples of Christ. Yet Peter's act of conversion is not separate from that of

[13] Josephus, *De bello Judaico,* 3, 162; and *Antiquitates* 8, 105. Apropos an exposition of the fellowship meal in the post-Easter period I was struck by this footnote in J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 255, nt. 191.
[14] Thus – and rightly – M. Hengel, 'Die Ursprünge der christlichen Mission', l.c., 33-34; J. Roloff, *Apostolat, Verkündigung, Kirche* (Gütersloh 1965), 138ff.

the twelve: belief in the resurrection presupposes communication among the twelve, hence the scriptural testimony to their 'at first doubting'.

§3 The experience of grace as forgiveness

Our structural analysis of the appearance stories shows that they point to a salvation-historical event, and that, like a scriptural reference, a 'vision' model is a means of articulating an event prompted by grace, a divine, saving initiative − grace manifesting itself in historical events and human experiences. In other words, the reports of what occurred in the form of appearances indicate that the process in which Peter and his group were reassembled after their dispersal was experienced by them as an act of sheer divine grace, as (in a different context) appears from the gospels. 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven' (Mt. 16:17). At the same time the presentation of this conversion in the form of an appearance vision underlines the divine endorsement of the christological affirmation. Christianity arose as a result of Jesus' message and his entire life, up to and including his death and, in addition to that, a *renewed* divine offer of salvation by the heavenly Jesus after his death, which made the disciples' return to Jesus a return to the living, crucified one.[15]

The New Testament does not specify the concrete historical events in which this 'grace and favour' or renewed offer of salvation in Jesus was manifested; it only speaks of this event as an act of amazing grace. The objective, sovereignly free initiative of Jesus that led them to christological faith, independently of any belief on the part of Peter and his companions, is a gracious act of Christ, which in respect of its enlightening impact is clearly revelational − not a human construct but revelation via a disclosure experience, verbalized later in the appearances model. What it signifies is not a model but a living reality.

[15] We are not to see any kind of 'rationalism' in this, intended somehow to demythologize the appearances of Christ. It has become clear, not from rationalism but from the actual intentions of Scripture, as shown by the structure of the appearances, that there are always intermediary historical factors in occurrences of divine grace. The appearances form no exception to this scheme of grace. Besides, what would a straight appearance of Jesus in the flesh prove? Only *believers* see the one who appears; a faith-motivated interpretation enters into the very heart of the event. Christ appearances are not like the 'manifestations' of St Nicholas. Faith is emasculated if we insist on grounding it in pseudo-empiricism, thereby raising all sorts of false problems: whether, for instance, this 'christological mode of seeing' was a sensory seeing of Jesus, whether it was 'objective' or 'subjective' seeing, a 'manifestation' or a 'vision', and things of that sort. All such questions are alien to the New Testament. I do not understand Pannenberg's lengthy exposition of this (*Grundzüge,* 93-103) nor the further discussion by his not even average cross section of critics (Br. O. McDermott, *The personal unity of Jesus and God according to W. Pannenberg* (St Ottilien), 262-269). Although I regard my hypothesis as justifiable, I realize that it constitutes a break with a centuries-old hermeneutic tradition. That is why I give it here *'salvo meliori iudicio' (and* cogent counter-arguments). The appearances as such are, after all, not an *object* of Christian faith.

Understood thus, the ground of Christian belief is indubitably Jesus of Nazareth's earthly offer of salvation, renewed after his death, now experienced
[391] and enunciated by Peter and the twelve. It means too that this same Jesus is acknowledged by God: the man put to death by his fellows was vindicated when he appealed to God. This is highlighted especially in formulae stating that God raised Jesus from the dead.[16] Presuming this absolute priority of grace, how did the disciples come to believe that Jesus was the risen one?

In New Testament theology one discerns an association of 'resurrection' with 'forgiveness of sins'. The Johannine gospel concludes an appearance of Jesus on Easter day with the words: 'If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained' (Jn. 20:22-23). The ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18) is mentioned along with Christian baptism in all the accounts of official appearances (Lk. 24:47; Mt. 28:19; Jn. 20:23). Forgiveness of sins is a paschal grace. After their Easter experiences the disciples preach 'the forgiveness of sins' (Lk. 24:47; Acts 26). Paul says: 'If Christ has not been raised . . . you are still in your sins' (1 Cor. 15:17-18); elsewhere: 'Jesus was . . . raised for our justification' (Rom. 4:25b). Forgiveness of sin is associated with the name of Jesus (Acts 5:31; 10:43; 26:18).[17]

This raises the question whether we should not invert those kerygmatic utterances in the case of the disciples' conversion process. Could Simon Peter (and the twelve), via their concrete experience of forgiveness after Jesus' death, experienced as grace and discussed among themselves (as they remembered Jesus' sayings about, among other things, a merciful God), not have found evidence for the belief that the Lord is alive? He renewed his offer of salvation; this they experienced in their own conversion; he must therefore be alive. In their experience here and now of 'returning to Jesus', in the renewal of their own lives they experienced the grace of Jesus' forgiveness and in so doing they experienced Jesus as one who is alive. A dead man does not offer forgiveness. Here-and-now fellowship with Jesus was thus restored.

The experience of having their cowardice and want of faith forgiven them, an experience further illuminated by their memories of the whole course of Jesus' earthly life, thus became the matrix of faith in Jesus as the risen one. All of a sudden they 'saw' it. This seeing may have been the outcome of a lengthier process of maturation, one primary and important element of which was enough to move Peter into action by reassembling the disciples. They clearly exchanged ideas about this initial element − 'they doubted' − until they
[392] reached consensus on their belief. Even the earliest, pre-Pauline credal formulations are the result of protracted theological reflection and not the

[16] 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 10:9; Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30,37; Rom. 4:24; 2 Cor. 4:14; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:21; etc. See below.

[17] Another tradition links the forgiveness of sin with Jesus' death (1 Cor. 15:3).

immediate articulation of the original experience. In the experience of forgiveness as a gift of grace − the renewed offer of saving fellowship by the crucified one − lies the risk element of faith, which is not, after all, a necessary conclusion from diverse premises. The individual experience of a new life assures the believer that Jesus is alive or is the coming judge of the world.

§4 Critical question: ambiguity of the term 'Easter experience'

Should we identify the Easter experience in all the early Christian traditions with the tradition of the resurrection kerygma? Tradition history poses some problems in this regard.

First we must make a distinction − however inadequate − between 'Easter experience' and the articulation of this experiential event by expressing it in words, which entails interpreting it in a given hermeneutic horizon. The term 'experiential event' is used advisedly to preclude a purely 'subjective' experience. Put differently: after his death Jesus himself was the source of what we call the disciples' 'Easter experience'; at all events it is an experience of grace. But as human experience it is self-aware and spontaneously triggers self-expression. This (non-reflexive) expression is an intrinsic aspect of the experience itself – which is why the proposed distinction cannot be thoroughgoing, hence is inadequate. Pure experience does not exist; however minimally, it is always articulated and as such interpreted. Thus an experience can never be detached from its linguistic context,[18] nor from its conjunctural hermeneutic horizon (for this see Part Four). Articulation of experience is filtered not only by language but also by existing hermeneutic models. Besides, in a more advanced phase there is subsequent reflection on the original experience along with its pre-reflexive interpretation. Such reflection is not a foreign, extraneous element, but an 'extension' of the experience and its interpretation, albeit with possible divergences from the initial experience. Yet the original experience is clarified and completed by accurate reflection. [393]

So in speaking of an Easter experience one cannot isolate a pre-linguistic phase from the interpretive element (e.g. 'resurrection'). The question is simply whether 'resurrection' was the primary element of articulation, or whether there were other elements of interpretation that may antedate the Christian resurrection idea.[19] Hence we are considering a very different question from

[18] See e.g. the discussion between N. Schreurs, 'Naar de basis van ons spreken over God: de weg van L. Gilkey', in TvT 11 (1971) (275-292), especially 289, and L. Gilkey, 'Ervaring en interpretatic van de religieuse dimensie: een reactie', ibid., 293-302. And P. Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation* (Paris 1965), dealing with the same nexus of problems.

[19] Thus e.g. Ph. Seidenstickcr, *Die Auferstehung Jesu in der Botschaft der Evangelisten* (Stuttgart 1967). According to this author experience of Jesus as the humiliated yet exalted servant is the earliest expression of the Easter faith.

that posed by W. Marxsen,[20] who also distinguishes between 'experience' and 'interpretation', but traces the Easter experience back to a specific experience of the historical, earthly Jesus; this immediately poses a danger that the term 'Easter experience' itself becomes an interpretation – a religious interpretation or the earthly life of the dead Jesus. In one sense this is fair enough: after Jesus' death christological interpretation begins. Thus the Easter experience with its interpretive element is part and parcel of 'Christology' as an interpretation of the historical, earthly Jesus of Nazareth. If exegetes and theologians who see Jesus' death (rather than human rejection of him) as the point of disjunction want to convince me of their view, they first have to show me why, after John the Baptist had been beheaded, his movement was able simply to continue on Jewish soil − as if his death entailed no discontinuity at all. Had the Jewish mentality changed so fundamentally within a year or two (i.e. by the time Jesus died) that people suddenly thought that his death raised doubts about his entire earthly ministry? The whole of Judaic inter-testamentary literature and the movement inspired by John (after his execution) radically contradict that view. True, in a Pauline (or pre-Pauline?) context and in the heated controversy between Jews and Jewish Christians, Deut. 21:23 was invoked: 'Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree' (see Gal. 3:13); but to what extent was this polemical point representative of early Christianity? This is all the more pertinent since, for the rabbis, 'crucifixion' had come to stand for Jewish loyalty to Yahweh after the mass crucifixions under the Roman occupation. That, though, in no way denies the historical fiasco of Jesus.

If we are not to regard Jesus' crucifixion in itself as a final schism in a Jewish and Judaic context, must we see the 'Easter experience' as a Christian interpretation of the earthly, that is, pre-paschal Jesus? My reply to that is:
[394] partly yes, and (emphatically) partly no! The question is, surely, whether the Christian interpretation after Jesus' death rests solely on experiences with the earthly Jesus, or whether it is partly undergirded by new experiences after his death. This strikes me as crucial. I am not thinking of experiences of an 'empty tomb' or 'appearances' (themselves an interpretation of the resurrection faith), but of experiences such as those enumerated above: the conversion process undergone by the disciples, their experience of grace after Jesus' death. That the New Testament bases itself on specific experiences after Jesus' death (however interpreted) seems to me, in light of the foregoing analysis, undeniable. Hence unlike W. Marxsen I proceed from the Easter experience as a reality, experientially real, and an experience of reality which nonetheless contains an element of articulation. That brings me to the last point: assuming the reality of the 'Easter experience', was the resurrection idea the earliest,

[20] W. Marxsen, *Dh Auferstehung Jesu als historisches und theologisches Problem* (Gütersloh 1964), with slight corrections in *Die Auferstehung Jesu von Nazareth* (Gütcrsloh 1968).

original interpretive factor, or were there other interpretations?

P. Seidensticker may have relied excessively on the work of E. Schweizer,[21] which had little or no support from exegetes, yet Schweizer's intuition seems to have been correct. In a new study, centring mainly on tradition history, L. Ruppert and G. Nickelsburg present a more differentiated picture,[22] and Kl. Berger's recent study − although not concerned with the 'resurrection' issue − points in a similar direction.[23] The context in which the Judaic-sapiential notion of the 'humbled and exalted suffering prophet' (including his martyrdom) was current is clearly that of Greco-Palestinian Jews − which says nothing for or against its antiquity in the early church (see Part Three).

A further distinction needs to be made. Even before there was any mention of resurrection in the Old Testament there was a vaguely articulated belief in God as Lord over life and death: Yahweh is a 'God of the living'.[24] Later this became: God has the power to make the dead alive again. This faith in a living God in relation to the dead could be expressed in diverse ways: either as resurrection, or (a more Greek idiom) as God calling 'souls' lingering in Hades or the underworld to himself. The Greeks did not conceive of the souls of the departed being 'with God' after death: to them the person was dead and his soul was in the realm of the dead (Hades, the Greek counterpart of the Jewish Sheol); but God was thought to have the power to recall souls from Hades.[25] For Aramaic-speaking Jews the whole (corporeal) human being, albeit leading [395] a shadowy kind of existence, was in the realm of the dead; hence deliverance from Sheol by God was called resurrection (though it was only a century or so before Christ that the Semitic notion of Sheol was fully differentiated). Apart from the difference in anthropology, both Greek- and Aramaic-speaking Jews were talking about the same thing: God's power to bring a dead person to life, even though a Greek-speaking Jew would feel less affinity with the concept of resurrection. The latter came to be envisaged, especially in apocalyptic Jewish circles, in a very 'materialistic' way: a return to life on earth with the same body and even, according to the rabbis, dressed in the same clothes.[26] Later apocalyptic writings introduced the remarkable idea of a 'progressive resurrection'.[27] The core of the Jewish belief in resurrection, therefore, goes

[21] *Erniedrigung und Erhöhung bei Jesu und seinen Nachfolgern* (AThANT, 28, Zürich 1955, 1962[s]).
[22] L. Ruppert, *Der leidende Gerechte. Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Alten Testament und zwischentestamentlichen Judentum* (Würzburg 1972), and the brief summary: *Jesus, als der leidende gerechte?* (SBS, 59) (Stuttgart 1972); also G. Nickclsburg, *Resurrection,* l.c.
[23] Kl. Berger, 'Die königlichen Messiastraditionen des Neuen Testaments', in NTS 20 (1973-1974), 1-45.
[24] See literature in Part Three, Section Two, note 1.
[25] E.g. Plato, *Symposium,* 179c:*'ex Haidou aneinai palin tèn psuchèn'*.
[26] Strack-Billerbeck, III, 475; even with the same physical blemishes that one had had; l.c., IV, 1175-6.
[27] Syrian Baruch 51.

beyond its apocalyptic form; it amounts to a faith in God, who is able to fetch the dead out of the realm of the dead and restore them to life. In itself this is not a specifically apocalyptic conception. It is also found in the non-apocalyptic (probably Pharisaic) 'Psalmi Salomonis' (3:12); and in late Jewish literature 'assumption' or 'taking up into heaven' without any resurrection is common (see Part Three).

This Jewish notion − God's power to bring the dead back from the realm of the dead, that is, bring them to life − was unquestionably the hermeneutic horizon in which Christians spoke of the living Jesus after his death. Even so, Jesus' new state was envisaged in a totally non-apocalyptic way. Firstly, the Jewish conception of resurrection was eschatological and (for the faithful) collective; there is no Jewish precedent whatever of an individual experiencing the eschatological resurrection before the end of the age; it even falls outside the apocalyptic framework. What Jewish literature does recognize is non-eschatological resurrections of special individuals who return to this world from the realm of the dead (albeit with a specific mission with a view to the coming last days). In the New Testament, too, we catch echoes of this Jewish idea: some indeed supposed that the earthly Jesus was none other than John the Baptist, risen from the dead (Mk. 6:14; Lk. 9:7-9). Thus it is clear enough from the New Testament as a whole that the Christian idea of resurrection differed radically from the notion of 'coming back alive to our world' (see later). What is at issue is the eschatological resurrection, but fulfilled non-
[396] apocalyptically in a single person; that is to say, for Christians it meant that the eschatological 'final age' had already dawned: Jesus was the 'first of those fallen asleep', 'the new heaven and new earth' would come soon.

What is apparently the earliest creed expresses belief in the Jesus who is to return as judge of the world and (for the church) bringer of salvation, without any explicit mention of his resurrection. At this point we tend tacitly to assume the resurrection, as in the Q tradition.[28] But is this justified? From the analysis of four ancient credal strands (see below) it should become apparent that only the various Easter Christologies make Jesus' resurrection the explicit object of Christian proclamation; in the other three early Christian creeds the resurrection is not an object of kerygma. That is broadly admitted by a good many scholars, but with the proviso that the resurrection is presupposed; yet not a single argument is ever advanced to support this; it is simply postulated (apparently on the strength of the resurrection kerygma throughout the New Testament, which is indeed a unifying factor in the canonical New Testament). But it begs the question whether for some Jewish Christians the resurrection was not a 'second thought' which offered the best way of making explicit an

[28] Likewise (after Hahn, Tödt, Fuller, et al.) also S. Schulz in his major study of Q: *Q-Quelle,* e.g. 74.

earlier spontaneous experience that initially had not been explicated. Such explication was prerequisite for making the resurrection an object of kerygma.[29]

We can say, however, that early Christian local churches all had an Easter experience, that is, knew the reality which other churches explicitly referred to as 'resurrection'. Thus for the Q community the crucified one was the saviour and judge of the world, soon to return but even now actively present in the preaching of Christian prophets; in other words, for them Jesus had evidently been 'taken up to God'. How? This is not considered anywhere. Their Easter experience is an enthusiastic experience of the Lord actively present in their community, and soon to come: a *maranatha* experience. They do not ponder the question whether Jesus was brought back from the realm of the dead by way of resurrection, 'rapture' or (on the Greek model) by God. Either way he was 'with God'. Something similar would apply to other local communities. That is why we need to examine their kerygma which does not explicitly take the resurrection as its object, in order to discover whether the 'Easter Christology' did not become the governing and canonical kerygma precisely because it so aptly articulated a reality which featured only implicitly in the kerygmatic scheme of other early Christian communities. The core of the Easter experience [397]
is primarily Peter's growing conviction (his conversion!) after Jesus' death: *the God of Jesus is a God who identifies with outcasts.* That gave the Christian minority church its explosive character. This is one of the reasons for arguing that the *reality* denoted by 'Easter experience' is independent of both the traditions centred on the Jerusalem tomb and the appearance traditions (which in my view already presuppose the Easter faith). On the other hand, it seems that Jesus' resurrection, the sending of the Holy Spirit, the founding of the church and the Easter experience (expressed as 'appearances') are real aspects of a single great saving event: by means of his resurrection Jesus is with us in a new way. That is what the appearances seek to express.

[29] Although not entirely unconnected with it, this problem is not the same as F. Hahn's (*Hoheitstitel,* 112-132), according to whom the 'exaltation' formulae are of a later date in early Christianity, presupposing as they do the delay or postponement of the parousia. This is rightly contested, not only by Ph. Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 164 and 173-175, but also by W. Thüsing, 'Erhöhungsvorstellung und Parusieerwartung in der ältesten nachösterlichen Christologie', in BZ 11 (1967), especially 216-219, and 12 (1968), especially 226-228; and G. Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu* (Munich 1971), 80-98; see 96, n. 42 (see Part Three).

Part Three

CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF THE CRUCIFIED-AND-RISEN ONE

Section One

THE GOSPELS: GENERAL HERMENEUTICS OF THE RISEN JESUS

Introduction

The New Testament interpretation of Jesus' resurrection must not be sought [401]
only, maybe not even primarily, in its explanation of 'raising from the dead', 'risen on the third day', 'exalted', et cetera, but in its accounts of Jesus' message, his ministry, his 'mighty works', his dealings with people and with sinners, the way he lived and died. The Christians did not derive the idea of Jesus' resurrection directly from apocalyptic thinking but from his earthly life based on his identification with the cause of God. Apocalyptic resurrection was only one of the resources available, which was moreover transformed (as will appear below) into a specifically Christian concept by the historical impact of Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus we end up in a remarkable hermeneutic circle: as a result of the first Christians' experiences after Jesus' death, his earthly life and death suggested the idea of resurrection or a coming parousia; at the same time they based the story of Jesus related in the gospels on their faith in the risen or coming crucified one. In other words, the gospel stories about Jesus are themselves an interpretation of Jesus' parousia and resurrection, while belief in the parousia or the resurrection was engendered by memories of the historical Jesus. The object of interpretation − Jesus of Nazareth − was eventually interpreted in and through religious affirmation of his resurrection (parousia), while that resurrection or parousia was in its turn the object of interpretation, which the gospel narratives interpret as memories of Jesus' earthly life, albeit in light of his resurrection or coming parousia. Jesus' life as a whole illuminates its constituent parts, and the parts evoke the total picture − all this within the [402]
traditions of Jewish experience with their peculiar ideas, expectations and images. That is why it is so difficult to distil any detailed, precise historical

memories of the earthly Jesus from the post-Easter 're-living' of them in light of the Easter experience. Neither is it really necessary. The life story of the disciples is integrated with the story of Jesus; they really did 'follow' him, and in the historical trail *they* left behind, especially in the New Testament, we are able to follow the exact trail of Jesus' own life and the course it took. Jesus himself left behind no collection of homilies, no writings, let alone a diary. He knew nothing of the compulsive human quest for self-identity; he was an utterly free person, living by the sovereignly free God whom he called his *Abba.* A. Loisy once quipped that Jesus preached the coming kingdom of God − and what came was the church! It would be more true to say: heedless of self, concerned only for his fellows, Jesus proclaimed the coming kingdom of God, and that kingdom did come, in the form of the risen crucified one. In his absorption with the Father Jesus may have forgotten himself, but God 'remembers' the historical Jesus and the resurrection and parousia are the end result of this divine remembrance: God himself identifies the kingdom of God with Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified one. Whatever Jesus' concrete conceptions in his preaching of the imminent kingdom of God may have been, he was not deceived in his proclamation. The proclaimed kingdom did come − in the living crucified one. The selfless proclaimer thus becomes the proclaimed one, the centre of the Christian creed. So intense was the first Christians' experience that Jesus Christ himself was the firstborn and initiator of the kingdom of God that initially they actually thought our earthly history in its present mode was over and done with: Christ's dominion was about to be inaugurated. Their enthusiasm had to face up to the mundane reality of ongoing history and the problem of the relationship between these eschatological events and earthly history, an issue hardly touched on in the New Testament, but which would inevitably arise over time. This simply shows that the Christian creed is no 'system' but a fundamental existential encounter with Jesus of Nazareth, an experiential encounter, the import and relevance of which had to be realized in ever new and changing circumstances, in highly creative yet obedient fidelity to what God's saving actions had accomplished in Jesus.

Chapter 1

EARLY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT CENTRED ON JESUS: DIFFERENT ECHOES OF THE ONE JESUS OF NAZARETH

§1 Taking stock of early Christian credal trends

Introduction: historical and theological importance of the initial credal models

Pre-Pauline, pre-Markan, pre-Johannine local traditions, as well as those of the Q community − reinterpreted or combined with one another, and thus corrected in both their kerygmatic and corresponding historical bias – all merge in the four gospels with their overriding canonical vision of the risen crucified one. From those traditions we can discover even now that all kinds of pre-canonical, independent christological interpretations of Jesus were in circulation, each manifestly linked to a particular facet of Jesus' life on earth, albeit selectively by each local community. The historical continuity between each distinctive kerygma and particular aspects of the earthly Jesus is a striking feature of all these early Christian 'creeds'. Equally striking, however, is their perspectival approach to Jesus, in other words the one-sidedness of the pre-canonical interpretations of Jesus. Nonetheless it is evident in every one of them that, allowing for the particular kerygma and religious milieu supplying the language in which to speak of him, the criterion and norm was Jesus of Nazareth himself. Hence the convergence of the different traditions in the four gospels, via the essential focus of the diverse christological projects on special facets of Jesus' earthly life, is also a mine of historical information about him. No credal accent without a specific memory of the earthly Jesus, no reference to a historical fact about Jesus of Nazareth without some kerygma. Belief and history go hand in hand, because historical human beings inevitably interpret; [404] and any definitive explanation is always a matter of trust and faith.

§2 Early Christian creeds and their historical foundation in Jesus

The question of God only has meaning for us human beings insofar as, being a human question, it speaks to our humanity; that is, if we come to realize that ultimately the whole cause of man is the cause of God himself. The human and the religious, although not fully identical, affect each other closely. The historically accessible human being, Jesus, becomes a new and more profound question for us as soon as, and because, he is the one who has something crucial and definitive to say about God. In Jesus we face the question of who or what God is. No doubt the Christian tradition has let go almost everything to do with Jesus that does not bear directly on his cause,[1] that is, the cause of man as the cause of God, formulated in the New Testament as God's lordship and kingdom.

Study of modern exegesis helps us to recognize diverse early Christian credal strands, each of which perpetuates certain facets of Jesus' life on earth. In exploring these credal trends I do not propose analysing Christ's honorific titles in early local Christian communities. Although those titles may originally have typified particular credal trends, they ended up featuring in all of them; only then do they acquire their varying connotations Neither do I establish the chronology of these creeds of the early church (except incidentally, where it is historically probable). Yet this inquiry is a necessary stage in determining the call Jesus of Nazareth addressed to Israel and thus also to us. Finally, the various trends should not be seen as deviations from the 'one gospel'; they existed before the gospels and can still be distilled from them. The canonical creed was fixed much later, and even then its norm remained the historical Jesus of Nazareth.[2]

[405] A. *MARANATHA* OR PAROUSIA CHRISTOLOGY: JESUS, BRINGER OF FUTURE SALVATION, LORD OF THE FUTURE AND JUDGE OF THE WORLD

Literature. H. R. Balz, *Methodische Probleme der neutestamentlichen Christologie* (Neukirchen 1967); KI. Berger, 'Zum traditions-geschichtlichen Hintergrund christologischer Hoheitstitel', NTS 17 (1970-1971), 391-425; M. Black, 'The christological use of the Old Testament in the New Testament', NTS 18 (1971-1972), 1-14; J. Blinzler et al., *Jesus in den Evangelien* (SBS, 45) (Stuttgart 1970); R.

[1] J. Blank, *Jesus von Nazareth* (Freiburg 1972), 13-14.

[2] The problem of the canon is not dealt with here. See D.K. Aland, 'Das Problem des neutestamentlichen Kanons', in NZSTh 4 (1962), 220-242; E. Käsemann, in *Besinnungen,* I, 214-223, and (ed.) *Das Neue Testament als Kanon* (Göttingen 1970); J. Frank, *Der Sinn der Kanonbildung* (Freiburg 1971); K. H. Ohlig, *Die theologische Begründung des neutestamentlichen Kanons in der alten Kirche* (Düsseldorf 1972).

Casey, 'The earliest Christologies', JTS 9 (1958), 253-277; H. Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* and 'Randbemerkungen zum "Lage" in Neuen Testament', EvTh 22 (1962), 225-233; Cullmann, *Christologie,* 200-244; J. Daniélou, *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme* (Tournai 1958) and *Études d'éxègese judéo-chrétienne* (Paris 1966); R. Edwards, 'An approach to a Christology of Q', JRel 51 (1971), 247-269; J. Ernst, *Anfänge der Christologie* (SBS, 57) (Stuttgart 1972); W. Foerster s.v. *Kurios,* ThWNT III, 1081-1095; R. Fuller, *Critical introduction to the New Testament* (London 1966) and *The foundations of the New Testament Christology* (New York 1965) (1972[2]); J. Gnilka, *Jesus Christus nach frühen Zeugnissen des Glaubens* (Munich 1970); F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 67-125; E. Haechen, 'Die frühe Christologie', ZThK 63 (1966), 145-159; P. Hoffmann, *Q-Studien,* and 'Die Anfänge der Theologie in Logienquelle', *Gestalt und Anspruch des Neuen Testaments* (Würzburg 1969), 134-152; J. Jeremias, 'Die älteste Schicht der Menschensohn-Logien', ZNW 58 (1967), 159-172; E. Käsemann, *Besinnungen,* I, 135-157; II, 82-104; II, 105-130; L. E. Keck, 'Mark 3:7-12 and Mark's Christology', JBL 84 (1965), 341-358; H. Koester, in Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories,* 158-204 and 205-231; W. Kramer, *Christos, Kyrios, Gottessohn* (Zurich-Stuttgart 1963); Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* and 'Erwägungen zur Geschichte des Urchristentums', EvTh 32 (1972), 452-467; W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* (Göttingen 1959[2]); E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums,* 3 vols (Stuttgart, Berlin 1921 and 1923); N. Perrin, 'The Christology of Mark', JRel 51 (1971), 173-187; J. A. Robinson, 'The most early Christology of all?', JTS 7 (1956), 177-189; G. Schille, *Das vorsynoptische judenchristentum* (Berlin 1970); J. Schneider, 'Der Beitrag der Urgemeinde zur Jesusüberlieferung im Lichte der neuesten Forschung', TLZ 87 (1962), 40-412; S. Schulz, 'Maranatha und Kyrios Jèsous', ZNW 53 (1962), 125-144, and *Q-Quelle;* H.-E. Tödt, *Der Menschenssohn*; W. Thüsing, 'Erhöhungsvorstellung und [406] Parusieerwartung in der ältesten nachösterlichcn Christologie', BZ (1967), 95-108 and 205-222, and 12 (1968), 54-80 and 223-240 (from which passages are quoted; now also in book form: Stuttgart 1969); Ph. Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 55-91, 92-140 and 147-167; T.J. Weeden, *Mark-traditions. Aux origines de l'eglise* (RechBibl, 7) (Bruges 1965).

(a) Basic trend of this creed

In view of the early identification of Jesus with the eschatological prophet, the *maranatha* Christology is probably the oldest creed, although it is difficult to reconstruct its original form. The concept of the messiah as the bringer of eschatological salvation does not stem from the Old Testament but from the so-called inter-testamental literature, hence it dates to Jesus' time.[3] H. Koester sees

[3] Between 400 BC and about AD 70/71 there emerge expectations regarding all sorts of 'end-time

the sociological setting of this creed as apocalyptic circles in Jerusalem, the place where the coming messiah was expected.[4] S. Schulz, on the other hand, locates this apocalyptic approach in the Palestinian Q communities which, although akin to the kerygmatic mentality in Jerusalem, nevertheless differ from it.[5] Allowing for some to my mind questionable points in his book, T.J. Weeden shows in a remarkable study that even the Markan gospel contains the same fundamental credal traits, albeit within the distinctively Markan Christology of the 'suffering son of man'.[6] I first present a synthesis of the main features of this parousia kerygma common to the Q and Markan communities and then analyse the essential differences between the Q community's tradition on the one hand, and the pre-Markan tradition and Markan redaction on the other.

This eschatological creed derives in the first instance from the prophetic and apocalyptic logia tradition in the early church,[7] although it is uncertain which honorific title, if any, was originally connected with this eschatological credal trend; F. Hahn and P. Vielhauer differ radically on this issue.[8] But typical christological titles are a poor guide when exploring what have been called early Christian credal strands, since contact between local congregations meant that they feature in virtually every tradition and came to express its particular creed.

This first credal pattern in the early church was expressed in apocalyptic and
[407] prophetic logia. The local churches drew on existing Jewish apocalyptic belief when interpreting Jesus after his death as the coming, decisive figure of the eschatological future, which was thought to be close at hand. According to this creed christological belief in Jesus means believing Jesus of Nazareth to be the Lord who will come in the last days to bring both salvation (grace) and judgment. (In the New Testament, as also in our classical confession, this initially sole creed was incorporated into a more fully developed, complex creed: 'Thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.') This eschatological creed looks forward to what is to come and what exists already as a heavenly reality: the judge of the world, Jesus, already exalted yet still to come; in cultic practice this reality is anticipated (*maranatha* − the Lord is coming − in the liturgy; see 1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20; Didache 10:6). We find an

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prophets' and end-time salvific figures, including the expectation – now separate, now quite clearly interconnected – of an end-time prophet and an end-time messiah; as well as – independently, to begin with, of any messianology – the expectation of a 'prophet like Moses'. Echoes of a popular expectation of 'the coming one' abound therefore in the New Testament: Jn. 6:14-15; 1:15,21; Mt. 3:11; 11:3; Lk. 3:16; 7:19,20b (see the detailed analyses that follow).

[4] *Trajectories,* 215.

[5] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 166-167.

[6] Th.J. Weeden, *Mark-traditions,* see below on this.

[7] Käsemann, in *Besinnungen,* II, 105-130,, 31-68, 82-104; I, 187-213.

[8] Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 13-53; Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 145-146, and 92-140.

echo of this eschatological-apocalyptic creed in Paul, which actually reflects pre-Pauline tradition: 'For the *Maran* [the Lord] himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will arise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air' (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Here the motif of the resurrection of the dead and the 'rapture' of those still alive is the imminent coming of Jesus as Lord, that is, arbiter of grace and judgment (for Paul this creed is already included in the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection). Also: we 'wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come' (1 Thess. 1:10).

Two titles of Jesus originally appeared in the same religio-historical, apocalyptic context: *Mar* or *Maran* (the Lord or *Kyrios* of the Jerusalem and Palestinian congregations) and son of man.

'Lord', *Mar* or *Maran,* was originally unmistakably associated with this eschatological creed; it was also connected with the Aramaic I Enoch 1:9, which is in fact cited with express reference to Enoch in Jude 14: 'Behold, the Lord is coming with his holy myriads, to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly . . .'.[9] In Aramaic 'The Lord is coming' is *Maran atha,* and most probably originally implied a sort of anathema: 'The Lord is coming to judge.'[10] This ancient 'Lord Christology' is also (though not primarily) connected with Ps. 110:1, which is cited independently in Mk. 12:36; Acts (frequently); Phil. 2:7-10 (a very old, pre-Pauline tradition − the earliest mention, some think, of a *Maran* Christology); Rom. 10:5-10 and 14:9ff.[11]

'Son of man' suggests the same apocalyptic setting, hence the coming [408]
bringer of salvation. The term is used in a manifestly apocalyptic perspective in Mk. 13:26; but in my view it seems possible that 'son of man' in the apocalyptic sense becomes part of the tradition only when Dan. 7:13 is quoted verbatim.[12] In the earliest, Aramaic phase of the Q community the term 'son of man' is used in the sense of his function as the coming judge (Lk. 12:8-9),[13] whereas the coming parousia or appearance of the son of man emerges only in the later phase of Q (Lk. 17:23-24).[14] What the earliest phase meant to convey was the identity between the heavenly, exalted Jesus and the son of man (not yet an identification of the *earthly* Jesus with the son of man); and this

[9] See M. Black, 'The christological use', 6-11.
[10] Black, ib., 11; C.F. Moule, 'A reconsideration of the context of Maranatha', in NTS 6 (1960), 307-8; cf. S. Schulz, *Maranatha,* l.c., 125-144.
[11] C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: the sub-structure of New Testament theology* (London 1950), 35.
[12] See further on, at: The son of man.
[13] Schulz., *Q-Quelle,* 71.
[14] Ibid., 71, aimed at Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 32-33.

identification in Q is grounded, not in appearances of Jesus, nor in Jesus' own proclamation of a coming son of man, but in the ecstatic eschatological pneuma experience of the original prophetic and apocalyptic local congregations[15] − a parousia kerygma without a resurrection (see below).

However closely a special meaning of Lord (*Maran*) and son of man may be associated with this first creed, these titles are not typical features. 'Son of man', although characteristic of eschatological apocalyptic Christology, is not a credal term, not even in this tradition. It never was and is not found in any ancient credal formulation.

As in all early Christian creeds, the structure of this one reveals a correlation between Christian kerygma and a typical aspect of Jesus himself. Which aspect of the earthly Jesus of Nazareth did these communities take as the historical point of departure for their kerygma? In other words, what was the theme of their tradition? Or what did they see in the earthly Jesus? The answer is clear: Jesus' own proclamation and tidings of God's imminent reign. The communities consciously saw themselves in continuity with Jesus' historical message of the nearness of God's kingdom.[16] According to this creed the church, in following Jesus, set out to do what Jesus did: announce the proximity of the kingdom of God. It did so, however, in awareness of the historical distance between Jesus' earthly life and its own proclamation; for the coming kingdom of God assumed the form of proclamation of the imminent, end-time parousia of Jesus, at any rate in the sense that the 'coming of God's
[409] reign' and the 'coming of Jesus the son of man', the judge of the world, while still to some extent separate events, are clearly in some − albeit unexplicated – way intrinsically connected.

This credal trend assumes the identification of Jesus with the son of man, either primarily of the earthly Jesus with the Jesus returning eschatologically as the son of man (as in the Markan tradition and redaction; see below), or primarily of the heavenly Jesus with the coming son of man/judge of the world (according to the earliest phase of the Q community; see below). At the same time this entails a discontinuous element in the 'ecclesial' continuity with Jesus' own proclamation here on earth: Jesus' person as the eschatological judge of the world, in other words, his parousia, itself now becomes the object of proclamation. Jesus' historical message is taken over by the church and passed on − but in the awareness that Jesus' person has entered into his message, whereas Jesus did not proclaim himself but the coming reign of God, which, being man's salvation, was 'his cause'. The churches understood this. Jesus' selfless proclamation of the imminent reign of God was 'personalized'.

[15] Thus Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 73. Yet uncertainties persist, on account of the arguments advanced by H.M. Teeple, 'The origin of the son of man Christology', in JBL 84 (1965), 213-250 (see below).
[16] Koester, in Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories,* 215.

The Easter experience does not feature in this credal strand; it disregards the appearance traditions. Not only is the resurrection not proclaimed; it is not even mentioned in the Q tradition.

In certain early Christian communities, then, Jesus was identified with the eschatological 'saviour figure' that was current in post-Old Testament, non-Christian, Jewish apocalyptic ideas at the time. These local churches found salvation in Jesus as the world's judge who is about to come dispensing both grace and judgment. In this identification we see continuity with the historical datum of God's reign, as well as an articulation of the 'identification' of Jesus with a key concept of Judaism at that time: the eschatological bringer of salvation.

There is a second important point of historical and substantial continuity between Jesus' message of the nearby kingdom of God and the church's proclamation of Jesus' parousia, namely the sending out of the disciples by the pre-Easter Jesus to all Israel, a mission which, according to the criteria of what authentically represents him, derives essentially from the earthly Jesus, especially since in the Q tradition it has no recognizably christological content and the disciples are simply instructed to pass on Jesus' own message, as well as heal the sick and drive out demons.[17] Here 'following Jesus' consists in spreading his message of the imminent coming of God's salvific reign. The general principle is realized: via the reflection of Jesus in the local churches we [410] reach the historical Jesus. We know the master by his disciples!

Having briefly sketched a very early Christian attempt at a creed − the kerygma of belief in Jesus' speedy return as eschatological deliverer, saviour and judge of the world − I now look into its two subsidiary strands.

(b) The creed in the tradition of the Q community

The kerygmatic scheme of this community's proclamation (i.e. in its first very early, Aramaic phase[18]) is based, not on formal concern with Jesus' earthly ministry as a whole, but with his message of the approaching and now imminent reign of God.

The Lord's Prayer, from this earliest phase of the Q tradition, is obviously a straight *Maranatha* Christology in all its parts: *'Abba,* hallowed be your name; your kingdom come; give us our bread for this day; forgive us our sins, for we also forgive the sin committed against us; and lead us not into temptation'[19] − a

[17] Mk. 6:6b-13, and substantially from the Q source: Mt. 9:37-38; 10:16,9-10a,11-13,10b-7-8,14-15=Lk. 10:2-12. See M. Hengel, *Nachfolge und Charisma* (Berlin 1968), 82-89; F. Hahn, *Das Verständnis der Mission im Neuen Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1963); J. Roloff, *Apostolat, Verkündigung, Kirche* (Gütersloh 1965); F. Beare, 'The mission of the disciples and the mission charge: Mt. 10 and parallels', in JBL 89 (1970), 1-13; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 404-410.

[18] See Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 55-176.

[19] Lk. 11:1-4=Mt. 6:9-13; see Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 84-93.

prayer unknown in the Markan material and in the Pauline and Johannine traditions. The Q community prayed for the coming of God's reign and begged to be kept safe in, or preserved from, the *peirasmos,* the tribulations of the end-time. There is as yet no sign of a delayed parousia − the earliest layer of Q is unique in that respect; all other recoverable pre-canonical traditions as well as the synoptics show symptoms of a 'postponement' of the parousia. For oneself one prays only for the barest necessities, whatever is absolutely essential on the eve of the parousia: physical sustenance for one day, as long as the parousia remains pending (Luke already turned it into 'from day to day'); in addition recoverable debts to others are remitted, because with the prospect of an imminent parousia they become pointless. Finally, the community prays that when the eschatological woes descend they will not apostatize, a prayer (not unknown in the Jewish tradition)[20] that the elect, in this case the Christians, be spared the ordeals and be taken up directly into God's kingdom.

The oldest Q material contains both the idea of the proximity of the kingdom of God (Lk. 6:20b) and that of the (imminent) arrival of the end-time son of man (Lk. 12:8-9). Although the notions of *basileia* (lordship and kingdom of God) and 'son of man' belong to separate tradition complexes in Jewish
[411] thought, in Q they are conjoined: the son of man brings the *basileia*.[21]

In the oldest Q tradition the earthly Jesus is the eschatological prophet; only the heavenly Jesus is identified with the coming son of man. This presupposes Jesus' being 'with God', but without making it directly an object of kerygma. The heavenly Jesus, currently active in the Christian prophets, is proclaimed as the coming eschatological saviour, but also as judge of those who will not accept the church's message regarding the coming Jesus/son of man. Crucial Q passages here are Lk. 12:8-9=Mt. 10:32-33: 'And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God' (Lk. 12:8). First of all there is the identity between 'me' and 'the son of man': a functional distinction within one and the same person. But the identification pertains to the heavenly Jesus and the son of man.[22] The point is that the stance one adopts towards the coming, exalted son of man proclaimed by the church is decisive for final salvation or condemnation at the 'last judgment'. The heavenly Jesus is the eschatological bringer of salvation; but for those who do not accept the church's message about Jesus he is the judge.[23] It is clearly an 'implicit Christology'; but in this oldest phase of Q it applies, not

[20] See Dan. 12:10; Apoc. 3:10.

[21] See J. Becker, *Jobannes der Täufer und Jesus von Nazareth* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1972), 100ff; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 71; Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 80-87.

[22] This differs fundamentally from Mk. 8:38 (see Mt. 16:27 and Lk. 9:26), even though Q material also seems to underlie Mk. 8:38. See Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 66-76; Lührman, *Q-Redaktion,* 51; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 33.

[23] Thus the basic thesis of Lührmann's book, *Q-Redaktion;* also Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 66-76.

to Jesus in his earthly existence (Jesus of Nazareth is the eschatological prophet), but to the heavenly Jesus, present and active in his eschatological community; in other words, Jesus is already exercising his lordship at the right hand of God. Yet this exalted state is still not the same as the exaltation of the *Kyrios* in pre-Pauline and Pauline or even synoptic theology;[24] it is seen as a very brief prelude to the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God. Thus the early Q tradition contains no kerygma of Jesus' present enthronement in heaven,[25] only of his coming parousia. Jesus' celestial action accomplishes the outpouring of the Spirit here and now, the church's prophetic activity; that is the source of confidence in his (imminent) coming. It is the 'Easter experience' of this community. The actual proclamation, through Christian prophecy in and by the church, is the dawn of God's kingdom. In other words, the eschatological community, grounded in the heavenly Jesus, is itself the dawn of the final kingdom.

As for the suffering and death of Jesus, these have no theological or kerygmatic significance in this credal trend. That is the lot of every prophet, especially the eschatological prophet.[26] In its earliest phase this end-time church is still a religious movement within Judaism and the synagogue. There [412] is no trace of anti-Jewish polemics, only religious critique of the Pharisees, which was also possible within Judaism. Anti-Pharisaism was prevalent in both Qumrân circles and Baptist movements.[27]

The oldest Q tradition reveals a community which, filled with fervent hope of the coming parousia, radically renounced possessions, a community in which the poor, the hungry and the sorrowful were deemed blessed, because in the apocalyptic reversal of every condition and relationship they would soon be rejoicing; a community in which men gave no thought to earthly cares but, forgetting about these, trusted unconditionally in God's providential nearness; a community which sharpened the decalogical facets of the Law, and in which divorce was not permitted; people were asked to love their enemies and surrender the principle of 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth', accepting the golden rule: 'As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them' (Mt. 7:12=Lk. 6:31). Being rooted in an apocalyptic eschatology, it was a-political, although asocial behaviour was deplored (Lk. 11:42=Mt. 23:23; Mt. 23:27=Lk. 11:44; Mt. 23:13=Lk. 11:52; all anti-Pharisaic). The Q community was an

[24] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 74; Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 259-260.
[25] Thus H.R. Balz, *Methodische Probleme der neutestamentlichen Christologie* (Neukirchen 1967), 186.
[26] The Q community adopts 'a non-Passion Christology': R. Edwards,'An approach to a Christology of Q', in JRel 51 (1971) (247-269), 253-259; also Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 238-257; Fr. Muszner, *Jesus in den Evangelien* (SBS, 45) (Stuttgart 1970), 38-49; Lührmann, *Q-Redaktion,* 94-95 and 103; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 486, and passim; all this as against W. Kümmel, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Heidelberg, 1963[12]), 39.
[27] *Schulz, Q-Quelle,* 94 and 99.

introverted one waiting for God in the coming of the heavenly Jesus.[28] The only christological title in this first phase of Q is son of man (Lk. 12:8-9) in the sense of the heavenly Jesus, the coming judge of the world in the last days. The (messianic) title 'Christ' does not appear anywhere in the Q tradition.

It was only in a later, albeit still pre-New Testament, phase of this community when Greek-speaking Jewish Christians had taken charge that essentially new elements were added to this eschatological Christology (whilst retaining all the foregoing tenets), thanks to the distinctive contribution of Greek-speaking Jews, the realization that the parousia was delayed and reciprocal contacts between Markan and Q material. The most striking innovations are dogmatic concern with every facet of the earthly Jesus, broadening the anti-Pharisaic critique into a general judgment on Israel as a whole (the Q community had severed the synagogue connection and had become a church) and receiving tax-collectors and sinners into the church.

The increasing concern with the earthly Jesus not only shows the influence
[413] of Markan material but serves a christological purpose: polemics aimed at a *theios anér* Christology (more about that below), at any rate in the sense of a theological approach that laid claim to sensational miracles for their own benefit and legitimation. In the Q tradition this theology is most clearly evident in the temptation stories (Mt. 4:1-11=Lk. 4:1-13; cf. Mk. 1:12-13). In this narrative we find a Jewish, scriptural and polemical interpretation of what the title 'Son of God' implies for the Q community. It is interpreted as a debate between 'the Jesus' (*ho Jèsous*) and 'the devil' (Mt. 4:1). For the first time the Q community transposes the concept of Son of God to the earthly Jesus. The temptations are not meant to be specifically messianic. The first and second temptations (according to the more correct sequence in Matthew) are a reaction against the Hellenistic-Jewish, Galilean idea that miracles are proof of being a son of God; the third temptation (on a mythical mountain) is apocalyptic in nature: the narrative at this point is a christological response to a political conception of worldwide dominion exercised by a messianic king. In other words, the Q Christology rejects both a *theios anér* Christology and the Zealotic-

[28] Thus Schulz,*Q-Quelle,* 55-176, after an analysis of the passages regarded as the oldest, Aramaic-Jewish layer in Q: Mt. 10:32-33=Lk. 12:8-9; Mt 5:3-4,6=Lk. 6:20b-21; Mt. 6:9-13=Lk. 11:1-4; Mt. 23:25,23,6-7a,27,4,29-36,13=Lk. 11:39,42-44,46-48,52; Mt. 5:18=Lk. 16:17; Mt. 5:32 Lk. 16:18; Mt.5:39-42=Lk. 6:29-30; Mt. 5:44-48=Lk. 6:27-28,35b,32-35a, 36; Mt. 7:12=Lk. 6:31; Mt. 6:19-22=Lk. 12:33-34; Mt. 7:1-5=Lk. 6:37f, 41f; Mt. 6:25-33=Lk. 12:22-31; Mt. 10:28-31=Lk. 12:4-7; Mt. 7:7-11=Lk. 11:9-13. For a similar conclusion, though argued in less detail, see H. Koester, in Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories,* 211-216, cf. also 168-175; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 32-39; R. Fuller, *Critical introduction,* 102-103, and *Foundations,* 130-131; D.E. Nineham, *The New Testament gospels* (Harmondsworth 1965), 34-37; Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 265-267, 212-245; A. Vögtle, 'Jesus', in E. Kottje-B. Möller (eds), *Oekumenische Kirchengeschichte, I* (Mainz-Munich, 1970), 3-24. This includes an impressive list of specialists (despite their differences regarding details).

messianic liberation movement bent on world domination by Israel.[29] These temptation stories intimate that the earthly Jesus is the 'Son of God' – not in virtue of miracles and a show of worldly power but in virtue of his trust in God and obedience to God's will as revealed in the Law (the Q community, ever faithful to the Law, is stranger to any controversy in this regard). According to Q any other interpretation of this christological title is 'of the devil'. The Law itself legitimates the claim to divine sonship. The Son of God is the obedient one, faithful to the Law. The title 'Son of God', as well as the 'divine miracle worker' Christology or the epiphany Christology of a *deus praesens,* a god in human form, comes from the pre-Markan tradition which this Q community now encounters and against which it reacts. The complete absence of the messianic Christ title in the Q community seems to be a clear reaction against a 'power' Christology which seeks miracles that do not benefit other human beings.

The question John's disciples put to Jesus, whether he is 'the one to come' (that is, the coming 'judge by fire', hence the son of man), clearly suggests that the earthly Jesus is now also identified with the son of man (Mt. 11:2-6=Lk. 7:18-23). Not just the heavenly but also the earthly Jesus is the son of man coming in judgment, not simply an eschatological prophet as was claimed before.[30] Jesus' own ministry is itself an end-time event, and the eschatological [414]
community is no longer the dawn of the kingdom. Via the reflection of communal pneumatic experiences they convey a clearer idea of the truly eschatological character of the earthly Jesus. Now not only the heavenly Jesus but (through the impact of the Markan tradition) the earthly Jesus as well reinforces their hope of the coming parousia; ultimately Jesus answers John's disciples by saying: 'Look at what I am doing.' In that way he highlights the imminence of God's reign in his own ministry, especially in his 'good tidings for the poor' (Isa. 29:18-19; 35:5; 61:1). Jesus' reply in Q is totally un-messianic, if one takes 'messianic' to refer to one particular Jewish tradition centred on the Davidic dynasty; but it is Jewish and messianic in a sense that we shall examine later. In these passages Jesus is invoking the functions of the end-time prophet (the Isaiahan texts in their late Jewish interpretation): the reign of God is already present for those who accept his message and are not scandalized by it. One's attitude to the earthly Jesus here and now decides between final salvation or final doom (Mt. 11:6=Lk. 7:23). The Jews who rejected Jesus are declared guilty by the Q community.

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[29] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 177-89. Cf. P. Hoffmann, 'Die Versuchungsgeschichte in der Logienquelle', in BZ 13 (1969), 207-223; see J. Dupont, 'L'origine du récit des tentations de Jésus au désert', in RB 73 (1966), 30-76; B. van Iersel, 'Jezus, duivel en demonen. Notities bij Mt. 4:1-11 en Mk. 5:1-20', in *Engelen en duivels* (Annalen van het Thijmgenootschap 55, no. 3, Hilversum 1968), 5-22; A. Feuillet, 'Le recit Lukanien de la tentation', in Bibl 40 (1959), 613-631.

[30] Ibid., 195; Hoffmann,*Q-Studien,* 198-215; Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 234.

To the extent that this later trend in the Q community reflects on Jesus' death, it sees it as the lot of all the prophets of Israel; they are rejected by the people of God (Mt. 23:34-36=Lk. 11:49-51; and Mt. 23:37-39=Lk. 13:34). Hence a salvific function attaches to the words and deeds of the earthly Jesus, not to his death. For those who comprehend Jesus' sayings and deeds the only saviour is the coming son of man, but it depends on their attitude to Jesus here and now.

The second phase of Q concerns two miracles of Jesus (Mt. 12:22-30=Lk. 11:14-23; Mt. 8:5-13=Lk. 7:1-10). Their purport is, on the one hand, rejection of a false Christology and, on the other, opposition to Jews who accused Jesus of being in league with the devil. These are no epiphany miracles − the title 'Son of God' does not occur in them − but signs of dawning salvation and the kingdom of God. The *basileia* is coming and yet is already present, not just in the prophetic message of the community but before that in the earthly Jesus; in Jesus it has already reached people (*ephthasèn eph'hèmas hè basileia tou theou,* Mt. 12:28b): the eschatology is 'in process of realization'. Thus for Q Jesus of Nazareth is indeed 'an eschatological phenomenon'.[31] Neutrality towards this Jesus is impossible (Mt. 12:30=Lk. 11:23) (even though the perspective
[415] provided by Q is still restricted to Israel. In the synoptic tradition, too, Jesus' miracles in absentia [Mt. 8:5-13=Lk. 7:1-10; and Mk. 7:246ff] involve only gentiles; the point at issue is not the sensational aspect of such a miracle but the Jewish background to these traditions; the pagan centurion knows that a Jew will not enter the house of a gentile, so he asks for a miracle by remote control; Jesus' end-time eschatological activity is directed exclusively to Israel).

Q deals with the problem of the delay of the constantly awaited parousia primarily in parables (Mt. 24:43-44=Lk. 12:39-40; Mt. 24:45-31=Lk. 12:42b-46; Mt. 25:14-30=Lk. 19:12-27; Mt. 13:31-32=Lk. 13:18-19; Mt. 13:33=Lk. 13:20-21), as well as in the Q apocalypse (Mt. 24:26-28,37-41 =Lk. 17:23-24,26-27,30, 34-35,37). The delayed parousia focuses attention on watchfulness and cautions people against premature identifications. The parousia will be public and plain to everyone; it will not be recognized in portents but will come 'suddenly'.

In this phase of Q the person of the earthly Jesus is already identified with the (coming) son of man, in an entirely non-apocalyptic use of the term (the parable of the children at play in the marketplace; Mt. 11:16-19=Lk. 7:31-35): the son of man/Jesus of Nazareth is a friend of tax-collectors and sinners, the kingdom of universal peace has begun; his earthly life foreshadows the dawning *basileia*; rejecting or accepting Jesus has eschatological relevance.

The earthly Jesus, too, is now called 'the Son' (Mt. 11:27= Lk. 10:22). (Mt. 11:25-27=Lk. 10:21-22 is a – to my mind wrongly − disputed Q text.)[32] The Son is the intermediary who reveals God's eschatological secrets to the 'little ones',

[31] The term is Schulz's: *Q-Quelle,* 212.
[32] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 215ff; Hoffmann, *Q-Studien,* 77-78; B. van Iersel, *Der Sohn,* 151ff.

that is, the members of the community (in keeping with the sapiential tradition, which crops up here and is typical of the Q community in its later phase). The wise ones, Israel's scribes and its leaders, shut themselves off from the revelation by Jesus and so forfeit their last chance of salvation. Jesus is 'the Son' because the Father has given him eschatological 'authority' (*exousia*); hence even in his life on earth he is son of man, vested with complete power. Again *exousia* is still to come yet already present. In this one detects the first influence of another credal strand, namely wisdom Christology (see below).

Besides son of man, Son of God and the Son, 'Lord' (*Kyrios*) also makes its appearance in the Q tradition (Mt. 24:42, 45-46,48,50 and 7:21,22 parallels), invariably in an apocalyptic context. With reference to the earthly Jesus, the title 'Lord' is uttered only in the pericope about the centurion of Capernaum, a [416] gentile (Mt. 8:5-13=Lk. 7:1-10). It could be translated as 'sir', but there is a deeper intention: *Kyrie* amounts to addressing Jesus as 'wonder-working saviour'[33] and, considering the tenor of the pericope, as someone with complete power and authority, such as this centurion or officer also enjoyed in his own sphere. In the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants (Mt. 24:45-51=Lk. 12:42b,46) 'the Lord' again features (Mt. 24:50), but since it is a straightforward parable, 'the Lord' could simply refer to the master of these slaves without any direct christological implication. 'The Lord' has yet a different meaning (Mt. 25:20,22,24,25) in the parable of the talents (Mt. 25:14-30=Lk. 19:12-27), which in Q is clearly a parousia parable: Jesus is away, gone abroad; the disciples have stayed behind. It refers, although in veiled terms, to crucifixion, but without any kerygmatic motives. 'After a long time' (the parousia is delayed) the Lord returns. In these verses 'the Lord', *Kyrios,* obviously signifies Jesus as the son of man of the last days. He is the son of man-*Kyrios* who at the close of the age will call men to account for what they have done with the talents they have received. Thus the eschatological life of this Q community, as it awaits the Lord's coming, is an actively working existence in a moral and religious sense, work no less hard than in the business world. Finally, the term *Kyrios* also appears in a critical sense (Lk. 6:46=Mt. 7:21): 'Why do you call me "Lord, Lord", and not do what I tell you?'. In the Q context *Kyrios* here has eschatological significance: it expresses a *maranatha* Christology which calls for action, not inactivity. Deeds, orthopraxis, is so important in this layer of Q that it may be responsible (in keeping with Greco-Judaism) for the 'doctrine of the two ways': that of apocalyptic revelation and that of the moral code (the decalogue), to which the *Didaché* explicitly refers.[34]

Conclusion: the Q version is one form of a widely disseminated early

[33] Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 83 and 241; Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 242.
[34] J.B. Audet, *La Didache* (Paris 1958), 252-257; P. Stuhlmacher, in EvTh 28 (1968), 178-179; Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* e.g. 458-460 and passim.

Christian kerygma. It has no explicit resurrection kerygma, although one might say that its idea of the heavenly Jesus actively present in the Christian prophets represents an equivalent of what other early Christian traditions call the resurrection. On contact with this latter tradition, therefore, it was able to recognize itself in it and integrate this resurrection kerygma with its proclamation of the parousia. Parallel to this, and eventually affecting and affected by it, we find another, perhaps equally ancient version of this type of creed: the Markan tradition.

[417] *(c) The Lord of the future in Mark's Christology*

The Markan gospel presents both the earthly 'suffering son of man' and the son of man who will come in power and glory only at the parousia. A striking feature − but also a hermeneutic key to the this gospel – is that Mark has Jesus enjoining silence in the case of confessions of Christ that point to a 'power' Christology, yet never where the one confessed is the real Jesus of Mark: that is, Jesus the son of man (a) who suffers during his earthly life, (b) is absent during the brief interlude of the eschatological community, but (c) is soon to come.[35] The phrase 'son of man' − used by Jesus only in the Markan gospel[36]− is not forbidden, but only christological confessions suggesting a 'power' Christology: Mk. 3:11-12; 5:7; 1:25; 1:34; as well as healings that might be misconstrued in a similar perspective: 1:44; 5:43; 7:36 and 8:26; in other words, heretical Christology is silenced. That is the so-called 'messianic secret' in Mark, which is not so much a secret as a veto on what Mark considers to be false Christology: Mark is quite willing to accept 'Son of God', a title often employed to express *theios anèr* ideas, provided it connotes the suffering son of man,[37] hence not a 'power' Christology. In this respect Mark is also honouring the trend of his older tradition, which calls the earthly Jesus the hidden 'Son of God', who only through suffering and death and the resultant legitimation is recognized as the true Son of God. Viewed in this perspective the peculiarly Markan scheme of an eschatological Christology becomes clear.

Because Mark's gospel, in contrast to the tradition of the Q community, does not assume the active presence of the heavenly Jesus, now living with God, during the (for Mark equally fleeting) period between the death and parousia

[35] Although certain of his detailed assertions are hard to accept, it seems to me that Weeden's basic view in *Mark-traditions* – viz. Mark's postulate of 'the absence' of Jesus between death and parousia – is, exegetically speaking, at least highly probable.

[36] Mk. 8:31-32,38; 9:12,31; 10:33; 13:26; 14:62.

[37] See N. Perrin, 'The Christology of Mark. A study in methodology', in JRel 51 (1971), 173-87; 'The son of man in the synoptic tradition', BRes 13 (1968), 1-23; 'The creative use of the son of man traditions by Mark', in UnSQR 23 (1967-8), 357-365; finally 'Mark 14:62: end-product of a Christian pesher-tradition', in NTS 12 (1965-6), 150-5; and L.E. Keck, 'Mark 3:7-12 and Mark's Christology', in JBL 84 (1965), 341-358.

of Jesus, its Christology depends solely on the memory of Jesus' days on earth on the one hand and on hopeful expectation of the coming son of man on the other. In the latter respect it concurs with the Q tradition, whereas on the former point the Markan material affected the Christology of (what S. Schulz and D. Lührmann regard as) the second, Hellenistic-Jewish phase of the Q community. Thus the dogmatic distinction between Markan gospel and Q tradition (as well as its consequences) lies in the fact that while, for the latter, resurrection and exaltation are identical, Mark transposes the exaltation to and identifies it with the mighty parousia of the Lord, even though many expected this parousia in their lifetime (Mk. 9:1). But on this very score Mark's community was getting disheartened: Jesus had not come yet! During his absence, to be sure, there was the present gift of the Spirit (see Mk. 13:11); but the Spirit and Jesus are by no means identical (see 3:28-29). Jesus, though risen and later, as son of man, destined to judge the world according to its acceptance or rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, was meanwhile kept hidden and ready in heaven to await his exaltation and coming in power. [418]

The Lord's absence − 'The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day' (Mk. 2:20; that is, will grieve over his absence, although the disciples will be strengthened by God's eschatological Spirit and their hope of the speedy arrival of Jesus son of man) − is partly symbolized by 'the tomb', and partly affirmed polemically by the conspicuous absence of any appearance stories in the authentic Mark (Mk. 16:9-20 is post-Markan and, although canonical, apparently a later attempt to synthesize diverse local church traditions and integrate the, by then, baffling 'archaic' Christology of Mark with the unified religious vision of the church as a whole). If the postulate is correct that in associating exaltation with parousia (i.e. not with resurrection) Mark does not recognize Jesus' present celestial activity but confesses his total absence from his sorrowing and suffering church, then it becomes understandable that he doesn't accept the tradition of the Jesus appearances: 'appearing' is what Jesus will do at the parousia, not before.

One can say that Mark's purpose was to re-focus the central kerygma of the eschatological coming of Jesus the son of man on the parousia − by then awaited for more than a generation − to counteract a sense of discouragement and a tendency to make the resurrection itself − for Mark the basis, ground and presupposition of the parousia expectation − the object of proclamation instead of the parousia. He wants to ground Christians' faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ who came to suffer, be rejected and is soon to return in power as Son of God and son of man. In this time of fasting for the church Jesus is absent; no more will he drink wine with his disciples until 'that day' when they are reunited (14:25). 'The tomb' stands between the two manifestations of the self

same Jesus of Nazareth: his presence on earth in preaching and praxis, suffering and rejection, and his eschatological appearance 'in power and glory'. This local congregation should concentrate on Jesus' words and deeds,
[419] on his earthly life and ministry in anticipation of his coming in power. The crucified one is the coming son of man. Thus Mark shares something of the Pauline christological concept and something of the Q community's eschatological kerygma, but his own kerygma centres on the intrinsic connection between the earthly Jesus (especially his suffering) and the parousia (8:27-9:8; 10:32-40). For him the coming of the kingdom of God and that of Jesus = son of man 'in power' (parousia) coincide (9:1 with 13:26-27; see 14:25); and meanwhile the church is 'orphaned', albeit comforted by God's gift of the Spirit .

Therefore the resurrection, which Mark presupposes in his kerygma of the parousia (16:6; 8:31; 9:31; 10:34), is not in itself an exaltation in glory or investment with power, but a basis for expecting the parousia. For Mark the exaltation is always bound up with the parousia, which is about to happen yet remains unpredictable (8:38; 9:2-8; 10:37; 13:26; 14:62). The key passages substantiating this interpretation are: 2:18-20; 14:61-62; 13:24-27, and the connection between 14:28 and 16:7, of great importance to those who read them without remembering what Matthew, Luke or John say about it later, but simply as recorded in Mark and read by the members of his church, who evidently had no tradition familiar with appearances of Jesus but were anxiously awaiting his parousia. Given these realistic assumptions, 14:28 and 16:7 in themselves could just as well refer to the parousia as to the appearances. Usually 'appearances' are read into these texts because of other traditions (Matthew, Luke, John and the conclusion later appended to Mark); but in a structural analysis of the Markan gospel it is more justified to read them as a direct reference to the eschatological parousia of Jesus the son of man.[38] This interpretation depends partly on how one interprets 13:24-27 and 14:62.

Daniel 7:13 (Septuagint) speaks of an *ascensus,* an exaltation of the son of man, not of a 'descent'. The same applies to Mk. 13:26. In 13:14-27 Mark depicts a heavenly scenario: Jesus' enthronement as son of man in power as an eschatological event. As in other older creeds in the New Testament (Phil. 2:10-11; 1 Pet. 3:19,22; Col. 1: 15-20), we are told that Jesus is to be glorified *after* the hosts of heaven or spiritual powers have been conquered and subjected to Jesus. In 13:25 Mark gives an apocalyptic portrayal of Jesus' victory over these powers, who then witness for themselves the full enthronement of the son of

[38] Thus, earlier on already, W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* (Göttingen 1959[2]), also Weeden, *Mark-traditions,* III-17, and 45-51.

man.[39] The whole scene (in contrast to e.g. Mk. 24:30, where the witnessing pertains to terrestrial beings) is set in celestial spheres, between Jesus and [420] heavenly powers; the earthly scenario was concluded in Mk. 13:24a, and not until 13:27 is there any further mention of people; after that comes the assembling of Jesus' followers by the angels. Only then are Jesus and his disciples reunited. Matthew and Luke turn Mark's exaltation of the son of man into a 'descent' of the son of man, who had already been exalted from the time of his resurrection (Mt. 24:29-31; Lk. 21:25-28). But Mark himself does not!

Mark 14:62, therefore, should be explained in terms consistent with this reading. Remarkably, 14:62: 'I am [he]; and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven' combines the 'standing' son of man of Dan. 7:13 (see also Acts 7:55-56) with the 'seated' Lord of Ps. 110:1. This combined quotation is typical of a credal trend that associates Jesus' exaltation not with the resurrection but with the parousia.[40] (In Acts 7:55-56, too, there is an implicit link via the combination of 'standing' and 'at my right hand'.) In the New Testament Psalm 110:1 is usually associated with Jesus' resurrection, perceived as exaltation (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Eph. 1:20; 1 Pet. 3:22; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2), whereas Dan. 7:13 is usually linked with the parousia. According to H. E. Tödt both texts cannot refer to the exaltation:[41] the 'sitting at the right hand' can (in an Old Testament context) only occur after exaltation and inauguration; hence the resurrection is an 'ascent' to God's right hand. Ps. 110 (in its Greek version, Ps. 109) in fact makes this distinction: the Son of David sits at God's right hand till all enemies have been subjected to him. Not until the judgment does one (in a Jewish sense) stand upright (Jesus the son of man, judge of the world, 'stands up'). Throughout the New Testament, therefore, there is this 'opposition': resurrection as 'sitting at God's right hand' (Mk. 14:62 parallels; 16:19 [pseudo-Mk.]; Acts 2:34-35; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3,13; 8:1; 12:2) versus the 'subjugation of all the powers' (not until the parousia) (1 Cor. 15:23 and 25; Heb. 10:13). Paul himself is evidence of the divergent viewpoints on this point in early Christian tradition; in his case, too, tradition and (Pauline) redaction do not tally (cf. 1 Cor. 15:25, referring to the future, with 15:27: 'it has already happened').

A (later) early Christian interpretation uses Dan. 7:13 to express the parousia by reversing the movement and making it a descent or 'coming down'.[42] In Mk. 13:26 and 14:62b the combination of 'resurrection/exaltation' is shifted to 'exaltation/parousia'; not as though 14:62b appends a later interpretation to

[39] Weeden, ibid., 129-130.
[40] Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 128-129, 181-183, 288-9; see also 177 and 282; and Weeden, ibid., 126-129.
[41] Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 33-37.
[42] Weeden, ibid., 126-131.

[421] 14:62a: from the outset the two are collated in a single verse (14:62).[43] In 14:62b Mark intends to depict an exaltation (not a descent) of the son of man, but he qualifies it as an end-time event.[44] Redemption is an eschatological event (13:13), albeit due to occur in the near future.

It follows that those who link exaltation with resurrection accept the heavenly activity of the Christ present in the church. Those, like Mark, who link exaltation with parousia do not recognize Jesus' heavenly, active presence in the church.[45] Mark was evidently not the only person in the early church to think like that, as Acts 3:20, 21a and the story of the bridesmaids in Mt. 25:1-13, Phil. 2:10-11, Col. 1:15-20 and 1 Pet. 3:9-22 suggest.[46] For these Christians the Lord had indeed been 'removed' from among them (Mk. 2:20). This accounts for the impatience and dejection in Mark's community.

Mark's polemic is clearly directed against various forms of (premature) 'power' Christology in regard to both the earthly Jesus and the exalted, heavenly Jesus, risen but not yet vested with power. Thus he has Jesus reacting vehemently against Peter's 'confession', because in Mark's gospel Peter clearly understands this confession of the messiah in terms of a 'power' Christology, in which the 'epiphany' of Jesus is prematurely disclosed and open to misinterpretation; this becomes apparent from the reactions to the first prediction of suffering that follow immediately (Mk. 8:27-28,31-33). Peter is a Satan! For Mark, Jesus of Nazareth is the son of man, suffering in his earthly life, absent now, but later coming in power at the parousia, Christ and Son. In contrast to Peter's messianic 'power' confession, the Markan gospel typically has a pagan centurion, symbol of authority and *exousia,* who in overseeing the execution followed the whole process at close quarters ('he saw and believed'), assert that this suffering Jesus is truly 'a son of God' (15:39); for only Jesus' ignominious suffering and death removed the danger of misconstruing him as 'Son of God' in terms of a 'power' Christology. Mark reflects no Christ-mystique, only the Jesus-mystique of following the earthly, suffering Jesus, who puts all his trust in the coming of God's reign. In contrast to Paul, with whom he shares some common features of a *theologia crucis,* he is wary of pneumatic experiences of the risen Lord. Mark is the gospel of 'Jesus' absence',

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[43] R. Fuller, *Foundations,* 145-146; 152,175; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 181-183 and 39.

[44] Weeden, ibid., 128-129.

[45] W. Thüsing, 'Erhöhungsvorstellung und Parusieerwartung in der ältesten nachösterlichen Christologie', in BZ 11(1967), 95-108 and 205-222; 12 (1968), 54-80 and 223-240 (now also in book form: SBS 42, Stuttgart 1969), denied this, because the Spirit's presence in the community is a gift of the heavenly Jesus. But it is very much a question whether *within the Markan gospel* this gift of the Spirit, on which Mark does indeed concur, actually has a direct and intrinsic connection with the risen Jesus himself: nothing points in that direction, rather to the contrary (e.g., Mk. 3:28-29; cf. Mk. 13:11 with Lk. 21:15). Even the Didache says: 'you shall not judge a prophet speaking in the Spirit' (17:27). This articulates a theology which acknowledges the primacy of the Spirit over the son of man. See R. Scroggs, 'The exaltation of the Spirit by some early Christians', in JBL (1965), 359-373.

[46] See R. Fuller, *Foundations,* l.c., 145ff, 185-186; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,*126-132 and 184-185.

and above all of the memory of the earthly Jesus as well as hopeful expectation of the coming heavenly son of man, whose exaltation, will usher in the [422] eschatological final kingdom, the reign of God. His is an anti-triumphalist Christology centring on the rejected Jesus of Nazareth. Since Jesus' departure we find ourselves living in a rather drab but necessary interim period (13:9-13) in which Christian faith will be severely tested. But those who accept this Christology will be saved (13:10-13). That is Mark's *theologia negativa*!

Of course, there are still ambivalences in this Markan interpretation. The New Testament concept of 'exaltation' turns out to be ambiguous and elusive; 'sitting at God's right hand' *can* imply a rule exercised here and now (and in many New Testament passages it does); but in an unequivocal *maranatha* Christology 'standing' marks the start of the eschatological victor's activity: only then are all enemies (including death) vanquished. That is what Mark has in mind, whereas he is silent, at any rate, about interim activity of the heavenly Christ (that is my refinement of Weeden's thesis).

The original Mark, corrected by the later canonical ending to the gospel (16:9-20) and so incorporated into the official church, strikes a note still helpful to 20th century Christians if we turn our minds to its christological purpose and its incorporation into the biblical canon.

In the New Testament as a whole Mark's is a fairly solitary voice. But we may well ask ourselves whether we do not detect in it − even in the New Testament − an echo of possibly the oldest Palestinian Christology (with a different tone from the Christology of appearances and the prophetic/charismatic 'enthusiasm' of some early Christian communities, e.g. the Q tradition). Mark presents Palestinian Christian traditions which are concerned both with Jesus' whole earthly ministry and with his eschatological functions as saviour and judge. The Pauline theology of the church as the 'body of the Lord', locus of the celestial activity of the exalted Jesus, strongly influenced the canonical image of Jesus − although we should be not be in a rush to discover the Pauline notion of the church as the 'body of Christ' in the synoptic gospels; in the Markan gospel, at any rate, there is not even a trace of it.

Though differing essentially on fundamental points, the two eschatological communities − the tradition of the Q community and the gospel of Mark − nevertheless agree in their basic creed, that Jesus, the coming son of man, is the Lord of the future. Both represent a *maranatha* Christology: eschatologically [423] speaking, Jesus brings salvation that is to come. Forgiveness of sins lies 'in the future'. In their focus on the earthly Jesus of Nazareth (and every aspect of his ministry) the Markan gospel and the second phase of the Q community (albeit under the influence of Markan material) basically concur, even though the object of the Markan material differed from that of the Q community, whose

tradition centred on the Lord present and operative in the church,[47] while the Markan tradition and Mark looked to the 'earthly Jesus'.

This purely eschatological creed subsequently influenced, for example, the Apocalypse of Asia Minor (the canonical Apocalypse) (as well as later Montanist movements).

In conclusion I repeat: this creed (of the Markan and Q communities) sees its continuity with the earthly Jesus of Nazareth in his message of the imminent kingdom of God and his rapidly approaching reign. Jesus' death marks no break in this; it is the first phase, the beginning, of the eschatological woes. The message of the historical Jesus, which the Markan and Q communities faithfully hand down, is thus linked exclusively with their Christian kerygma of the imminent coming of Jesus the son of man, a creed (in the Markan tradition) developed on the basis of Jesus' resurrection (which in itself, however, is not the core or object of this credal trend); in the Q community the parousia kerygma relies more on the charismatic/prophetic experiences of Christians who saw in them the hand of the one whom God is holding in readiness, the son of man coming as judge. The difference between the two communities is that the Markan congregation, which would appear (in all historical probability) not to confess any immediate saving activity of the risen Christ prior to the parousia, has to rely fully on the whole ministry of the earthly Jesus, and not just on his eschatological message of imminent judgment and mercy, as in the earliest phase of the Q tradition, which is therefore interested only in Jesus' preaching (logia) and hardly at all in his miracles. A historical concern with every facet of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, therefore, really follows from the Markan (or pre-Markan) kerygma itself, just as concern with the *historical* message of the earthly Jesus (the reign of God) follows from the Q kerygma (which in a later phase, under the influence of the Markan material, broadened its historical focus on the earthly Jesus).

[424] B. *THEIOS ANÈR* CHRISTOLOGY (?): JESUS THE DIVINE MIRACLE WORKER. CHRISTOLOGY OF THE SOLOMONIC SON OF DAVID

Literature. F. C. Baur, 'Apollonius von Tyana und Christus', *Drei Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der alten Philosophie und ihres Verhältnisses zum Christentum* (ed. E. Zeiler) (Hildesheim 1966²); H. D. Betz, *Lukian von Samosata und das Neue Testament, Religions-geschichtliche und paränetische Parallellen* (TU, 76) (Berlin

[47] Whether the Letter of James is a late, re-Judaizing document or a very primitive one (perhaps the earliest in the New Testament), which is in line with this very old (possibly oldest) credal strand, I leave open. There are arguments for an early dating (see Elliot-Binns, *Galilean Christianity,* l.c., 45-48 and Th. Boman, *Die Jesus-Ueberlieferung,* l.c., 197), but also several passages in James that would appear to contradict that. We know little, however, about the history of the tradition (later corrections or interpolations) of these texts.

1961); L. Bieler, *Theios anèr. Das Bild des 'göttlichen Menschen' in Spätantike und Frühchristentum* (Vienna 1967²); G. Friedrich, 'Lk. 9:51 und die Entrückungschristologie des Lukas', *Orientierung an Jesus* (Freiburg 1973), 48-77; H. Koester, *Trajectories,* 187-193 and 216-219; G. Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu* (Munich 1971); G. Petzke, *Die Tradition über Apollonius von Tyana und das Neue Testament* (Leyden 1970); J. Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* especially 182-202.

There is an extensive secular Greco-Roman literature about people who manifested 'divine strength' (strength, *virtus* or *aretè,* that is, virtuousness, reliability and power; hence this literature (known as aretalogy) is a genre that in the early Christian church also appropriated 'the life of Jesus' and was perpetuated later in the *acta martyrum* and *acta sanctorum.*

This *theios anèr* doctrine comes from Hellenism but strongly influenced the Hellenistic Jews of the Diaspora who later became Christians. Apollonius of Tyana, illustrious rulers like Alexander the Great and the emperor Augustus were regarded as divine prodigies; they are described as 'sons of God', *divus* Augustus, the divine emperor. They are actually celestial beings who, clothed in terrestrial form, appear in our world, performing such deeds of virtue (often by renouncing all pleasure, meat, wine and sexuality) and strength (*aretè;* they are exorcists and heal the sick, sometimes even raise the dead) that they are clearly 'epiphanies' of God: the divine is made visible in their earthly but miraculous appearance. They are preternatural, therefore, often virgin, born of God himself (that is to say: they are divine). At death they are 'taken up', removed from the world of men and admitted to the company of divine beings and afterwards they frequently appear to their intimates and devotees. The lives of such heroes are recorded for purposes of propaganda to win followers who will emulate the hero in question; it is edifying literature. This by way of a brief summary of the Greco-Roman, Hellenistic oriental *theios anèr* ambience. [425]

When they heard the message about Jesus of Nazareth and became Christians Greek-speaking Jews, nurtured on these ideas, were given every reason to interpret Jesus in the framework of the Hellenistic divine miracle worker. (My use of the term 'Christology of the divine miracle worker' is purely provisional; later − under sapiential messianism − it will be seen that the latter is a more appropriate term, better supported by tradition history. That is why the title of this particular 'credal strand' is qualified with a question mark. Even so, the *theios anèr* idea remains, in my view, a real influence – which is why, despite my reservations, the title has been retained.)

On the one hand the New Testament reprimands people who eschew marriage and the use of certain foods (1 Tim. 4:3), on the other Paul[48] and the

[48] H.D. Betz, 'Eine Christus-Aretalogie bei Paulus (2 Cor. 12:7-10)', in ZThK 66 (1969), 288-305; H.W. Kuhn, 'Der irdisches Jesus bei Paulus als traditionsgeschichtliches und theologisches

gospels[49] contain passages that are clearly directed against *theios anèr* conceptions among Christians. The respective sources used by Mark and John for their gospels are very likely *theios anèr* Christologies, 'miracle traditions', though not the same ones.[50] In this aretalogical interpretation Jesus is seen as a divine miracle worker, demonstrating his divinity by acts of power. John 20:30-31 is probably the last part of John's 'source book of signs': 'Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.' The *vitae* of all prodigious men of God end in more or less the same way; for instance, the miracle stories about Judas Maccabaeus: 'Now the rest of the acts of Judas, and his wars and the brave deeds that he did, and his greatness, have not been recorded, for they were very many' (1 Macc. 9:22; see also Ecclesiasticus 43:27). Aretalogies or the lives of heroes are recorded for purposes of propaganda. Thus the accounts of the extraordinary events associated with the extolled hero are, as it were, the distinctive creed of this interpretation of Jesus, irrespective of which honorific titles are applied to Jesus, although in profane literature 'Son of God' is the most apposite title for the divine, virtuous and mighty prodigy whose life is being described. But neither Paul, who refuses to know Christ 'after the flesh', that is, from the viewpoint of this aretalogical model (2 Cor. 5:16 and 11:4), nor Mark, John and Luke accept the *theios anèr* Christology, at any rate not without some kerygmatic correction. For Paul this means preaching 'another Jesus' (2 Cor. 11:4). Luke, too, (in his gospel and in Acts)
[426] does not propound a substantially *theios anèr* Christology;[51] and Mark invariably follows up Jesus' (allegedly 'God-epiphanous') miracles with a display of disconcerting incomprehension by the disciples; in addition he has the disciples fail in their attempt to heal the sick (Mk. 9:14-29):[52] a Christian veto on a theology of Christ as the divine miracle worker!

Although not canonical, a *theios anèr* Christology clearly did exist in the oldest strata of early Christianity and in some Greek-speaking, Jewish Christian circles. A good deal of evidence points to a Galilean Christology based on a 'miracle tradition' and 'call' traditions (Mt. 28:16ff; see Mk. 3:13ff; 9:2ff; Jn. 21:2-13; also Mk. 14:28 and 16:7-8). There was a pre-Pauline, pre-Markan and pre-Johannine christological aretalogy; too many New Testament data point in that direction to allow us to deny the fact. It proclaims that a

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Problem', ibid., 67 (1970), 308-318; cf. Th. Boman, *Die Jesus-Ueberlieferung,* l.c., 184-207.

[49] Th. Weeden, *Mark-traditions,* 138-158; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 292-297; Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* esp. 182, n. 265, in reaction to G. Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief* (Neukirchen 1964).

[50] See Weeden for the Markan gospel and Robinson, in Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories,* regarding John's *'sèmeia'*-source ('The Johannine Trajectory'), 232-268.

[51] Roloff, *Das Kerygma,* 188-205.

[52] See also R. Pesch, *Jesu Ureigene Taten?* (Freiburg 1970).

divine power was operative in Jesus of Nazareth and consequently in those who followed him: through faith in him his devotees acquired the same power to exorcize, perform healings and so forth. Although divested of a *theios anèr* Christology, Luke often uses *theios anèr* images to make it easier for Greeks to 'empathize' with the gospel.[53] Thus after his gospel, being the story of Jesus' mighty deeds, his Acts are a record of the 'mighty deeds' of his followers, the apostles. Nevertheless, even in its Lukan redaction, Acts 2:22 displays typical features of an aretalogical Christology: 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst ...' His infancy narrative, too, is aretalogical, even though its theological purpose is to show that Jesus of Nazareth is truly the Son of God, not just at the resurrection, nor just at his baptism in Jordan, but from his very birth. Luke's conception of Jesus' virgin birth ('therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God', Lk. 1:35) only becomes intelligible in a Christology which is unfamiliar with (or denies) the ancient tradition of the pre-existent Christ Wisdom, yet refers to Jesus as Son of God from the outset (and not just at his baptism or resurrection).

Nonetheless even this (never canonically sanctioned) aretalogical strand affirms a historical and theological continuity between Jesus and the church. Historical criteria establish that Jesus performed a number of miracles, but as signs of the coming kingdom of God (Mt. 11:5; Mk. 3:24ff; Lk. 11:20), not as proof of his divine power; miracles are evidence of an eschatological event, illustrations of Jesus' eschatological proclamation.[54] Confronted with them, [427]
people are called to enter the kingdom of God. Miracles are a praxis of the kingdom of God. Although its interpretation is slanted, the credal strain represented by christological aretalogy is grounded in a historical datum in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. For all its non-canonicity this creed again proves the first Christians' concern that their kerygma has to be based on true facts about the historical Jesus. The general correlation principle that in the disciples (here miracle workers) one can recognize the master (Jesus the miracle worker) still applies: the community is a reflection of Jesus; discipleship discloses an aspect of the historical Jesus.

In view of the frequent, explicit and implicit criticism of the aretalogical creed in the New Testament, this interpretation of Jesus seems to have been a potent factor in early church congregations, especially because its missionary propaganda was an essential part of aretalogy. The miracle stories and accounts of the call and sending out of disciples seem to cohere in a particular tradition complex pointing to Galilee. It is no *maranatha* Christology; on the

[53] See below the 'holy sepulchre' according to the Lukan version.
[54] See below in the chapter on Jesus' 'mighty works'.

contrary, the disciples are already receiving salvation from Jesus here and now. Even the resurrection kerygma seems to have been unheard of initially. It is a (very ancient) Christology, entirely centred on the earthly Jesus, in whom salvation is actually given; but here attention is focused on God's activity and how it becomes epiphanous in Jesus' historical ministry. Perhaps one should speak not so much of a *theios anèr* Christology as of a prophetic sapiential messianism, displaying certain traits of the divine miracle worker (see below). Again Jesus' death constitutes no break. Jesus' divine power continues to operate in the miracle-working disciples.

The tradition of Jesus' 'appearances' also seems to have arisen in this credal model. The *ôphthè* term − 'he made himself seen' − itself derives from the 'epiphany' tradition. It is not Pauline and occurs in Paul only in the context of a quotation (1 Cor. 15:3-8). The 'epiphany' Christology is essentially linked with the Galilean tradition which handed down Jesus' miracles and exorcisms: God visibly acts in this person. On the other hand, after his death the divine miracle worker (the eschatological Solomonic prophet) appears to be at work in his trusted friends (see Lk. 10:16; Mt. 10:40; 28:20b). The association of the tradition of the (messianic) divine miracle worker with that of Jesus' resurrection crystallizes in the theme of 'appearances', that is, a theologoumenon in which
[428] Christians from an 'epiphany' tradition assimilated the resurrection kerygma of other local Christian communities, incorporating and articulating it in their own 'epiphany' theology: the 'epiphanizing' of the crucified-and-risen one, who even after his death is actively present in his followers. In 'epiphany' terms this active presence is represented as 'appearances'; that explains why belief in the resurrection existed before there was any mention of appearances. It also explains why the appearances are essentially bound up with the dispatch of missionary disciples and why they consistently point to a Galilean origin, which the traditions about miracles, calling or sending out also suggest. Finally it explains the tendency of the New Testament to speak of 'apostolic appearances': that is, manifestations to Peter and the eleven.

In 2 Cor. 3:1 Paul talks about emissaries carrying letters of commendation − apparently written by some local congregation attesting their 'miraculous acts' in the footsteps of Jesus. They follow Jesus in his mighty acts, as opposed to Paul's claim that he follows Jesus 'in weakness', through his suffering; with a mixture of irony and sarcasm Paul tells his opponents: you are strong, I am weak (1 Cor. 4:10; 2 Cor. 4:7); and in a fit of overconfidence, for which he apologizes, he goes on to list his heroic achievements: a life of hardship, suffering, persecution (2 Cor. 6:4-10; 12:12; 1 Cor. 4:11-13). These emissaries preach not Christ but themselves, says Paul (2 Cor. 4:5). He sees through the one-sidedness of this christological scheme (2 Cor. 4:7-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-33). The opponents' lack of orthopraxis contradicts the orthodoxy of their Christology.

When this type of creed was eventually 'christened' and incorporated into the canonical creed, it ceased to exist in its own right, although its influence persisted via the Markan and Johannine gospels.[55] Comparison of the Q theology (only two of Jesus' miracles) with the four gospels, and of the gospels with one another, reveals a tendency to magnify the miraculous element in Jesus' life or to project well known miracle stories from other (secular) sources onto Jesus of Nazareth, in whom amazing liberation was indeed manifest. The apocryphal gospels and many *Acta apostolorum* show how the propagandizing and devotional *theios anèr* literature drifted away from Jesus of Nazareth as its norm and criterion when it exceeded the limits of the canonical New Testament.

Even this Christology, because of its very aberration, still has somehing to teach us, as has the canonical reaction to it: the New Testament consistently [429] resists any unrealistic divinizing of the historical person and refuses to let go of the real criterion, Jesus of Nazareth. And there were undoubtedly startling phenomena in the ministry of Jesus.

C. 'WISDOM' CHRISTOLOGIES: JESUS, THE MESSENGER AND TEACHER OF WISDOM; JESUS, THE PRE-EXISTENT, INCARNATE, HUMBLED YET EXALTED WISDOM

Literature. Kl. Berger, 'Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund der christologischen Hoheitstitel', NTS 17 (1970-1971), 391-425; F. Christ, *Jesus Sophia. Die Sophia-Cbristologie bei den Synoptikern* (Zürich 1970); M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (Tübingen 1973²); A. Feuillet, *Le Christ la sagesse de Dieu d'après les épîtres pauliniennes* (Paris 1966) and 'Jésus et la sagesse divine d'après les Évangiles synoptiques', RB 62 (1955), 161-196; H. Koester *Trajectories,* 193-198 and 219-223; C. Larcher, *Études sur le livre de la Sagesse,* (Paris 1969); R. Martin, *Carmen Christi* (New York 1967); J. T. Sanders, *The New Testament christological hymns* (Cambridge 1971); S. Schulz, *Q-Quelle* (passim); J. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology and Law in Matthew's gospel* (New York 1970); Kl. Wengst, *Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums* (Gütersloh 1972); U. Wilckens, *Weisheit und Torheit* (BHTh, 26) (Tübingen 1959).

Set formulas and hymns included in the New Testament, as well as passages in the gospels taken over from the Q tradition, reveal a close connection between Jesus and wisdom literature.

In the latest collection of Proverbs from the early Hellenistic period we find that both wisdom and folly are to some extent personified. Wisdom is a

[55] Koester, in Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories,* 190-191.

'mythically' pre-existent, heavenly being (Prov. 8:22-31); she is as it were the playful darling of God (also Job 28). According to Job 28 this wisdom is hidden in God and inaccessible to human beings, except to those to whom God reveals it. In a historical combination of apocalypticism with wisdom, wisdom comes down to earth, where she is a stranger, unacknowledged and rejected, who then returns to heaven. Yet she is also a teacher of men (Prov. 9:1ff), mediatrix of divine revelation. Here early sapiential, Greek and oriental ideas and apocalyptic thinking begin to merge. In this period we see throughout the East, also in Greece, the emergence of speculation about heavenly 'intermediaries'
[430] between God and man. Man's relationship with God proceeds via mythical intermediary beings. This hypostatized wisdom was associated mainly with the doctrine of creation (Prov. 3:19; Job 38-42, Ps. 104:24; 136:5; etc.).

Some connection between this trend and Greek aretalogy (see above) can hardly be denied (see Ecclesiasticus 24:3-7; 1:1-20; 24:5-6; with obvious allusions to Eastern religiosity). Logos, wisdom and law are identified as the power permeating and holding together the whole of creation. Although universal, wisdom is attainable only by a few of the elect.

Besides that, from the Maccabean period onwards another concept of wisdom emerged, specifically in the circles of the 'Chasidim', a Jewish pietist party, out of which both the Pharisaic party and the Essenes eventually grew. The book of Daniel also stems from these circles. The Chasidim or pietists formed a penitential movement with a very definite apocalyptic view of human history. 'The wise' are the righteous ones (Dan. 11:33,35; 12:3,10). Chasidic wisdom is based on a direct revelation from God: wisdom, insight into the 'last things' (*eschata*) is a result of revelation of heavenly wisdom (esp. Dan. 2:20-23; 1 Enoch). Here prophecy, wisdom and apocalypticism are combined. To sum up, the Chasidic idea of wisdom has three layers: (a) only the righteous are wise (Dan. 12:10); the wise man is one who acquires true knowledge of the Law and practises it; (b) in the tribulations of the last days these wise and faithful keepers of the Law are given divine disclosures, which enable them to understand the eschatological events; (c) complete wisdom is an eschatological gift of the time of salvation. This Chasidic notion of wisdom conflicted quite sharply with the hypostatizing speculations of Hellenistic wisdom ('Greek wisdom'). That, then, is a brief survey of the cultural and religious key concepts used in this (third) early Christian credal trend to convey the christological meaning of Jesus of Nazareth.

In the later phase of the Q community Jesus is associated with pre-existent Wisdom; the latter sends her messengers, the prophets, but also the eschatological prophet, without Jesus ever being identified with pre-existent

Wisdom − a circumspect wisdom Christology.[56] Jesus, the earthly son of man, is the Son known only by the Father because the Father has given him all authority and power, so that the heavenly Wisdom has come to dwell in him; he appears and acts as the eschatological emissary of pre-existent Wisdom. Missionary formulae are typical of this wisdom Christology. The Matthean [431] gospel goes further and identifies Jesus with Wisdom; eventually, in the apocryphal gospel of Thomas, Jesus identifies himself with Wisdom.

But apart from these logia the sapiential myth of a pre-existent Wisdom is applied to Jesus mainly in very ancient hymns in the New Testament, in the poetic form of a *drômenon* or cosmic drama in different acts: pre-existence, humiliation (coming down to earth), return and exaltation of Wisdom. The earliest hymns are: Phil. 2:6-11 (to some extent stripped of its mythical character by Paul's interpolation of the reference to Jesus' death), and, even more pronounced, the Johannine prologue, Hebr. 1:3-4 and Col. 1:15-20. (Set in a very different perspective are 1 Tim. 3:16 and 1 Pet. 3:18-22.) Here (especially in Phil. 2:6-11) we have the Christian churches' very early application of the model of pre-existence, incarnation, humbling and exaltation − in other words, the *descensus-ascensus* model (*katabasis* and *anabasis*) − to Jesus Christ.[57] To speak of 'forms of dependence' foreign to Christianity is not accurate. The fact is that in the latter half of the first century three currents (Judaism, Christianity and 'pre-gnosis') were finding literary embodiment at more or less the same time, using much the same cultural and religious concepts. They shared a universally disseminated *Zeitgeist* and mind-set. The question is only how and in how far the Christians, in assimilating current socio-cultural thought patterns, managed to keep their distance from them on the basis of their norm and sole criterion: Jesus of Nazareth − hence what were the Christian variants in their accommodation to the *Zeitgeist*.

The closeness to the *theios anèr* Christology (deriving as it does from a similar mixed source) is clear enough, even though in the incarnation of the *deus praesens* the accent is more on the aspect of humiliation. That is why the three currents are dealt with separately. Yet under another key term, 'Solomonic-Davidic messianism', we have to see them as a single early Christian movement in line with a Jewish tradition in which the 'divine miracle worker' has already fused with the sapiential messianism of the suffering wise and righteous one (see below). Wisdom Christology subsequently got bogged down in gnostic speculations, while it also came to inspire the universalistic logos Christology of the church fathers. It seems to have been widespread in

[56] Mt. 11:25-27=Lk. 10:21-22 (see Wis. 6-10). Also Mt. 23:34-36= Lk. 11:49-51; Mt. 9:37-38,10,7-16=Lk. 10:2-12.

[57] See also S. van Tilborg, '"Neerdaling" en incarnatie', in TvT 13 (1973), 20-33, although his suggestion that with the departure of Jesus the incarnation is 'at an end' seems to me insufficiently established in a Johannine context.

diverse early Christian traditions and even appeared in diverse forms,
[432] although the preferred form was, apparently, the hymn. Even so, it would seem to be a Christology nurtured primarily in 'sophisticated' Greco-Jewish circles.

The question is: what historical Jesus event correlates with this creed? What historical and substantive continuity does it display, such as we found in the case of the other credal trends? Jesus clearly made use of sapiential sayings and proverbs. In that sense it is historically legitimate to see him as a teacher of wisdom. The continuity is apparent in the way the disciples followed Jesus: like Jesus, they are mystagogues initiating people into God's secrets. In essence, this implies belief that Jesus is connected with God and raises the question of God: he tells us about the Father − indeed an important, even focal facet of the life of the earthly Jesus, for the *katabasis* model puts the emphasis on salvation in Jesus, but deriving *from God*. While there is considerable continuity between Jesus of Nazareth and this wisdom Christology if one looks beyond the mythical model, its alien character is equally real. The canonical Scriptures adopt a guarded stance; on the one hand the New Testament cites these hymns, but they are re-worked and located in the evangelical canonical creed. Besides, especially in Paul we discern some resistance to the practical consequences of the model, which threatens to degenerate into a 'scholastic' kind of mystery doctrine meant only for initiates who care nothing for the common herd (see 1 Cor. 1-4, where Paul inveighs against 'the wisdom of the Greeks').

D. 'EASTER' CHRISTOLOGIES: JESUS, THE CRUCIFIED-AND-RISEN ONE

Literature. See Part Two, the chapters about death and resurrection.

It is wrong to call this credal model 'Pauline'. Paul refers to the creed of the risen crucified one as 'the gospel' (1 Cor. 15:1ff); death and resurrection are not presupposed as a basis for proclaiming the parousia, but are themselves the object of proclamation, albeit, for Paul, in the context of his expectation of an imminent parousia. Paul represents only one subsidiary strand in 'paschal' or
[433] Easter Christology. The distinction becomes clear if we compare his ideas about baptism with those of the deutero-Pauline letters. In the Pauline tradition resurrection and Christian baptism are interrelated. But in Paul's view baptism enables us to share in Jesus' death, not immediately in his resurrection: 'We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life [or: 'we too *shall* walk in newness ...']' (Rom. 6:4-11). Paul speaks of a shared dying, but the shared resurrection, 'being raised with him', is a strictly eschatological event. In the deutero-Pauline texts, on the

other hand, Christians have been raised already by virtue of their baptism: 'God ... raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus' (Eph. 2:4-7). This is manifestly a different view of the relation between Jesus' resurrection and Christian baptism, a viewpoint against which Paul appears to react in 1 Cor. 15. Thus both before and after Paul there was an 'enthusiastic' interpretation of baptism, based on Jesus' resurrection and appearances. The Corinthians are not denying Jesus' resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:12; they have received the faith and are established in it (1 Cor. 15:1-7; 15:11). Christ is risen already. They do believe, however, that Christians not only died with Christ through baptism but are already raised with him; they are already enthroned in heaven. Theirs is a realized eschatology: through baptism they are already raised, hence there is no longer any resurrection to come (15:12) − that is behind them. Here we have a genuine resurrection Christology to which Paul opposes a paschal and parousia Christology, also based on Jesus' resurrection. There was a pre-Pauline tradition in which the parousia no longer had any place, because everything had been accomplished and completed in Jesus' resurrection itself, and through baptism Christians participated in it − a resurrection kerygma minus a parousia (a realized and purely present eschatology). Ephesians 2:6 – God 'raised us up with him and made us sit with him in the heavenly places' − comes from an old baptismal hymn in which baptism is itself taken to be a resurrection: 'Therefore it is said: Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light' (Eph. 5:14). 'He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son' (Col. 1:13). Paul himself does not recognize this resurrection kerygma (see Rom. 6 and 1 Cor. 15), which would appear to be pre-Pauline, in view of the fragments of these ancient baptismal hymns and Paul's reaction to certain ideas at Corinth. We have also seen Mark reacting against this separate tradition of resurrection and [434] appearances which exclude the parousia. A 'present' (realized) eschatology is not the outcome of a long evolutionary process; it is one of many early Christian eschatologies, even prior to Paul. 'The resurrection is already past' (2 Tim. 2:18), that is, in Christian baptism; and for that reason there is no resurrection to come: '... when he raised him from the dead, when he enthroned him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above government and authority, all power and dominion, and any title of sovereignty that can be named, not only in this age but in the age to come. He put everything in subjection beneath his feet and appointed him as supreme head to the church, which is his body and as such holds within it the fullness of him who himself receives the entire fullness of God' (Eph. 1:20-23, NEB). This, too, seems to be a hymnic fragment from the same tradition, which sees the subjugation of all powers to Jesus as already accomplished, in contrast to the Markan gospel

(Mark 13) and to Paul, for whom death is 'the last enemy' (1 Cor. 15:26, clearly indicating some disparity between tradition and redaction).

By contrast, Paul presents another form of Easter Christology that maintains the futurity of the parousia and the general resurrection, and elevates Jesus' atoning death to a focal position in the kerygma. Paul's own Christology is most unequivocally expressed in 1 Cor. 15, where he places diverse elements of tradition in a peculiarly Pauline perspective. He is stressing the identity and continuity in the apostolic preaching: they all proclaim the risen crucified one: 'Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed' (1 Cor. 15:11). In 1 Cor. 15, Paul is combining the parousia kerygma or *maranatha* Christology with an explicit Easter Christology, thus negating the pre-Pauline baptismal kerygma of 'being raised together with Christ'. In that way two pre-Pauline traditions acquire a distinct Pauline stamp: the basis of the parousia Christology − the resurrection − is exposed (not yet explicated in the Q tradition, though plain in the pre-Markan one), and the 'enthusiastic' resurrection kerygma is integrated with the parousia Christology and thus once again 'eschatologically' stretched (from 'already' to 'not yet'). To assume that the New Testament gradually 'demythologized' a mythical-cum-eschatological orientation, thus transforming it into a purely 'present-ial' eschatology is to overlook the initially pluriform traditions of the early Christians. In certain Christian milieux, after all, the typical 'enthusiasm' of a
[435] present eschatology is as old as can be, and is in fact what other local Christian communities reacted against on the basis of their own christological schemes.

The 'paschal' or Easter creed stresses both the saving value and atoning character of Jesus' death 'for our salvation', and the saving import of the resurrection as God's victory over all the powers of iniquity, especially over 'the last enemy', death: for the Christian, however, this lies in the future. We are able to reconstruct the two oldest credal formulations of this from 1 Thess. 4:14; Rom. 4:17; 1 Pet. 3:18 and Rom. 14:9 (and other pre-Pauline formulae). On the one hand 'God raised Jesus (from the dead)', on the other 'Jesus, who died and was raised' (see Rom. 4:25; 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:4; Gal. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:10; Acts 2:24)[58]. Since the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection has already been dealt with in some detail, this brief reference must suffice.

Typically, the term 'Christ, messiah', hardly ever used in the other credal trends, is the one most commonly associated with the paschal creed. In this **o**ne discerns a clear tendency: this man, namely the crucified one, is the messiah.[59] Among Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, too, the name 'Jesus Christ' or

[58] See G. Kegel, *Auferstehung Jesu. Auferstehung der Toten* (Gütersloh 1970), 12-20; also Koester, in Robinson-Koester, *Trajectories,* 198-204 and 223-229; and further literature in the later chapters on death and resurrection.

[59] H. Schlier, 'Die Anfänge des christologischen Credo', in *Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie* (Freiburg 1970), 13-58.

'Christ Jesus' originated, its purpose being to drive home the significance of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. The title 'son of David' also belongs to this credal tradition (Rom. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:8).[60] The connection between 'Christ' and 'son of David', and between suffering and death, is not apposite in the context of the Davidic dynasty, but it is not specifically Christian either; it is an established Jewish concept from a particular prophetic and sapiential tradition (see later).

Again there is historical and substantive continuity between Jesus of Nazareth and the Easter kerygma. It is a historical fact that Jesus was executed by the Roman occupying power (c. 30 A.D.). According to this creed the angle from which the earthly Jesus is the norm and criterion of Christian belief is his historical suffering and death. The most profoundly human aspect of the man − his passion and death − is made the starting point for a christological project. Compared with the second and third credal trends the paschal creed is more intent on safeguarding Jesus' true humanity; and Paul in particular is vehemently opposed to an aretalogical and sapiential conception of the earthly Jesus as a disguised *deus praesens.*

According to this creed the sole justification for citing other actions and sayings of Jesus is that they illustrate the context of Jesus' suffering and death. [436] The danger is that this creed may disregard all the other aspects − in other words, the legitimate part of the other credal patterns and their differently oriented historical concern with Jesus of Nazareth. In itself this credal trend expressive of an Easter Christology cannot be considered canonical, although the Easter kerygma is essential for a canonical Christology. But in the actual canonical writings the four pre-canonical credal strands are included in a sort of synthetic fusion of both their kerygmatic trend and their implicit historical interest in particular facets of Jesus of Nazareth. Taken together they are canonical, whereas an isolated Easter Christology is in fact uncanonical, as would be a theology of Jesus of Nazareth without the Easter kerygma. That is why it was necessary to scrutinize these four credal trends, at the same time and primarily seeking the underlying historical *memoria Jesu* (on the working hypothesis that the Christian community is a reflection of the earthly Jesus). It seemed to me be the only point of access.

The paschal creed, moreover, is not uniform and must not be identified with Pauline theology. For Paul (and even before him, in the pre-Pauline congregations) this creed goes hand in hand with proclamation of the present powers of the risen Christ, the *Kyrios,* thus with a cult of the risen Lord, of whom the church is 'the body'. Although we have pointed out that the

[60] See C. Burger, *Jesus als Davidssohn. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Göttingen 1970); J. Ernst, *Anfänge der Christologie* (SBS, 57) (Stuttgart 1972), 39-42. 'Son of David', used of Jesus, is a *theologoumenon* without a meaning subject to historical checks (see below in this Part).

kerygma of the crucified one is no less fundamental to the Markan gospel than to Paul, it assigns a different theological position to the resurrection; besides, Mark would probably have opposed an ecclesiological concept of the church as the body of Christ; for him the church is the end-time community under the eschatological guidance of God's Spirit in the absence of the coming Christ. What is more, there are subtle differences in the Easter Christology of each of the four evangelists.

In the post-New Testament period the 'Easter kerygma' of the gospels gradually developed into a creed which became the normative *regula fidei*. The gospels were called authoritative expressions, no longer according to the criterion of Jesus of Nazareth but according to that of the church's creed. Later still the Council of Nicea put an end to pre-Nicene christological pluralism: a particular strand in the New Testament − the Johannine one − became the criterion of Christian (christological) orthodoxy, whereas it used to be only one of many christological options.

[437] *Conclusion.* There appears to have been no creed or kerygma in early Christianity that did not take a particular historical aspect of Jesus' earthly life as ground, starting point and criterion of its interpretation of the faith. Underlying each of these creeds is a historical facet of Jesus' life. The fusion of these diverse credal strands in the canonical gospels, each with its distinctive historical angle on Jesus of Nazareth, is therefore not just a merging of various interpretations of Jesus; it also collates a lot of information about Jesus' life on earth culled from various local church traditions. Of course, this information has no built-in historical guarantee (thus the historical criteria proposed above still have a necessary function). But it does show that different Christian congregations, each in its own way and basing itself on its own creed, cultivated a particular *memoria Jesu* and became a channel of authentic Jesus tradition. Because of its kerygma, which, to say the least, left the significance of the risen Jesus living in heaven mostly in the shadows, the Markan tradition concentrates exclusively on the historical Jesus and the hopeful expectation of his speedy return in glory: this tradition has the greatest interest, therefore, in Jesus' earthly life, his ministry, deeds and words, his suffering and death. The earliest stratum of the Q community also passed on certain logia of Jesus; but its dogmatic interest in all aspects of the earthly Jesus arose only later, partly under the influence of the Markan material. There is every reason to assume (in the complex synoptic problem) that Matthew and Luke not only made liberal use of Mark's gospel but also of the material provided by the Q communities, and in addition they both drew on their own independent traditions or sources. John, belonging to quite a different tradition (where the value of the historical *memoria Jesu* is difficult to assess according to our aforementioned historical criteria), in virtue of his theological view of the

connection between *Pneuma* and *anamnesis* or memory (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14), includes just as many detailed historical recollections of Jesus, whose historicity we are unable to check.

All in all, we are led to conclude that the New Testament, not in spite of its diverse kerygmatic projects but because of them, does provide substantive information about Jesus of Nazareth, at least as reliably as any other serious secular book of that period. But it is intellectually irresponsible simply to assume this in advance. Once problems have been raised one cannot shrug them off with some authoritarian answer of faith. Within the totality of [438] tradition, sketchily depicted with a variegated and manifold range of meanings and interpretations, we are nonetheless confronted with the vital question which the earthly Jesus asks us.

What does emerge from these outlines of early Christian Christologies is that they all respond in faith to the immediate, permanent and definitive significance of Jesus. Although all of them are inspired by Jesus of Nazareth, the immediate experiential ground of the Christian affirmation of Jesus' present and continuing significance appears to vary: the focal point of each and every credal trend is the definitive importance, here and now, of *Jesus in person*, not just his message or his resurrection − because the person of Jesus is the coming judge of the world, who brings salvation or judgment; because the person of Jesus is a divine prodigy to be emulated, actively present in his followers; because his person is itself a 'story of God'; because he alone can let us participate in his resurrection. Although Jesus' historical message about the coming kingdom of God is of abiding value, there is no single instance, either pre-canonical or in the New Testament, of an attempt to continue the task of disseminating this good news which is not intrinsically connected with the person of Jesus. Christianity is not just about his abiding message and its definitive relevance, but **is**, at bottom, about the continuing eschatological relevance of his person. That is the real christological unity in these four credal models.

The four distinct credal strands also demonstrate concretely what was said more abstractly in Part One, where our concern was with method and hermeneutics: the experience and articulation of finding definitive meaning and purpose, or salvation, in somebody, will inevitably be expressed in key concepts, anthropological views and expectations that inspired people in a particular era: that, under the impact of the earthly Jesus, produced the four credal models we have been discussing.

Chapter 2

FIRST IDENTIFICATION OF THE PERSON: LINK BETWEEN THE EARTHLY JESUS AND THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN CREEDS

Presenting the problem

It would be too much of a coincidence if, on the basis of certain aspects of [439]
Jesus' earthly life, the early church managed to arrive at four fundamental credal models, which later on, albeit with some reciprocal correction, blended naturally to shape the Jesus image of the gospels and the whole New Testament. In that case the gospels would have produced one coherent, congruous figure out of disparate bits and pieces − rather like a solved jigsaw puzzle. What happened in fact was something different. Before they were in a position to formulate their creed the local churches, starting with certain data about the life of Jesus, first came to identify the person of Jesus, and only then could their recognition and naming of his person (albeit in each case viewed in the perspective of a particular facet of his life) become the source of the divergent credal trends. Besides, the identification process was originally the same in each local community, in other words, it is the source of all four credal strands; which is why they cohere and coalesce in the canonical gospels. Hence recognition and designation are the link between the earthly Jesus and the creed of the churches, between the proclaiming Jesus and the proclaimed Christ. For the fact that the four credal models were able to merge in the canonical gospels presupposes (except perhaps for those who see early Christianity ideologically as a syncretism of many different currents) not only a reference, common to all the creeds, to the one Jesus of Nazareth as norm and criterion, but also that the same basic inspiration, the same identification of the person underlay the four fundamental religious perspectives. Otherwise the local congregations could not possibly have ended up (albeit sometimes after [440]

some controversy) seeing themselves reflected in the creeds of other early Christian churches. Now the one fundamental source of inspiration common to all the credal models is their acknowledgment, from the outset, of salvation in the actual person of Jesus: their identification of Jesus with the end-time prophet − the basic creed of all Christianity. Hence if it can be shown (also on the basis of our specified historical criteria) that the identification of the person of Jesus with the eschatological prophet of God's 'season of mercy' is most likely a pre-Easter datum − though perhaps only as a *question* (constantly in the minds, sometimes even on the lips, of his companions: 'Is he the coming one?') − then an 'implicit Christology' indeed antedates Easter; although in that case we cannot interpret the explicit post-Easter Christology of early Christianity in such 'high' christological terms as the Nicene tradition, for instance, was to do in a legitimate but not inevitable way. If so, the modern problem of the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ – which arose following D. Strauss, F. Bauer, M. Kähler and R. Bultmann − must be reversed: the identification of the person of Jesus of Nazareth, even before Easter, can then show us exactly what early Christianity meant by the confession. He is the Christ, the son of man, the Son of God, the Lord. We often behave as if we knew only too well what these words meant in the New Testament and the early church; and we proceed to inquire whether these titles really fit the earthly Jesus whom we have previously reconstructed 'objectively' and 'historically'. In terms of our working hypothesis − that for the first Christians the historical Jesus was both norm and criterion of all confession, homology, catechesis and paraenesis − we have to set aside our too rashly assumed, precise knowledge of what these confessional notions imply, and inquire how identification of Jesus' person with the eschatological prophet affords insight into what the local Christian congregations meant, even may have meant by their confessions. This is not to deny the validity of later dogmatic developments in the context of new questions and different philosophical worldviews; but it assigns great weight to the very first identification of Jesus' person, an avowal which takes the concrete, historical Jesus phenomenon as its direct norm, whereas later problems may be purely the result of the history of ideas − aporias arising from a by then established conceptual framework.

[441] §1 Existing Jewish models of end-time saviour figures

A. THE END-TIME PROPHET, 'FILLED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT', WHO BRINGS THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION TO THE OPPRESSED: 'GOD'S REIGN HAS BEGUN'

Literature. J. Becker, *Johannes der Täufer und Jesus von Nazareth* (Neukirchen-

Vluyn 1972), 44-53; Kl. Berger, 'Zum traditions-geschichtlichen Hintergrund der christologischen Hoheitstitel', NTS 17 (1970-1971), 391-325; and 'Die königlichen Messias-traditionen des Neuen Testaments', NTS 20 (1973-1974), 1-45; J. Coppens, 'Les origines du messianisme', in *L'Attente du Messie* (RechBibl) (Bruges 1954), 31-38; 'La relève du messianisme royale', ETL 47 (1971), 117-143; 'Le messianisme Israélite. La relève prophétique', ibid., 47 (1971), 321-339; within that: 'Le serviteur de Yahwé figure prophétique de l'avenir', ETL 47 (1971), 329-335; 'La mission du serviteur de Yahwé et son statut eschatologique', ETL 48 (1972), 343-371; 'Le prophète eschatologique. L'annonce de sa venue. Les relectures', ibid., 49 (1973), 5-35; O. Cullmann, *Christologie,* 11-49; R. Fuller, *Foundations,* 46-49, 67, 125-129, 167-173; F. Gils, *Jésus prophète d'après les évangiles synoptiques* (Louvain 1957), J. Giblet, 'Prophétisme et attente d'un messie prophète dans l'Ancien Testament', *L'Attente du Messie* (RechBibl) (Paris-Bruges 1954), 85-130; F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* Appendix: 'Der eschatologische Prophet', 351-404; E. Haechen, 'Die frühe Christologie', ZThK 63 (1966), 145-159; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leyden-Cologne 1961); W. de Jong, *Studies in the Jewish background of the New Testament* (Assen 1969); Kl. Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* (Gütersloh 1970); R. Meyer, s.v. *Prophètès,* in ThWNT VI, 813-828; A. Néher, *L'Essence du prophétisme* (Paris 1955); O. Plöger, *Theokratie und Eschatologie* (Neukirchen 1962[2.]); J. Scharbert, *Heilsmittler im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient* (Quaest. Disp. 23-24) (Freiburg 1963); O. H. Steck, *Gewaltsames Geschick;* G. M. Styler, 'Stages in Christology in the synoptic gospels', NTS 10 (1963-1964), 398-409; H. M. Teeple, *The Mosaic eschatological prophet* (JBL-Monogr. Ser., 10) (Philadelphia 1957); S. van der Woude, *Die Messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumrân* (Assen 1957). Finally: Strack-Billerbeck, II, 479ff, and IV-2, 764-798.

Initially only the king was anointed in Israel, hence he was *mashiach,* messiah [442]
or Yahweh's anointed one.[1] As such he was 'the man after God's heart' (1 Sam. 13:14), the one 'equipped with God's strength' (1 Sam. 2:10; Ps. 21:2). This tradition was afterwards incorporated into the main religious tradition of Israel as the locus of God's saving activity (2 Sam. 7:4-17). In this stratum of tradition Israel's king, the anointed one, is called 'son of God'. His appointment was accompanied by the formula: 'I will be to you a Father, and you shall be to me a Son' (Ps. 89; 2 Sam. 7:4-17). Christ and Son of God are official titles of the kings of Israel. Later this royal christ tradition was sealed by God's covenant with the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam. 23:1-7; Ps. 2 and Ps. 110). Because the messiah or king is Yahweh's representative, ruler of the world, Israel's Davidic-messianic christ tradition in due course took on universal features (Ps. 2:7-12). Little by little the king became such a dominant figure that

[1] 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13; 2 Sam. 19:10; 1 Kings 1:39; 2 Kings 11:12; 23:30.

he assumed all other functional attributes: the Davidic king or christ acquired priestly and prophetic traits.

The result was that after the fall of the kingdom and at the beginning of the exile, first the high priests,[2] then the priests as well[3] and finally the prophets[4] were installed in office by anointment (for according to the original meaning of Deut. 18:15-19 prophetism had also become an office and an institution in Israel). The anointed high priest in particular assumed royal status: he was 'the anointed prince' (Dan. 9:25). His christ-function was to guard Yahweh's laws,[5] to be a teacher in Israel, totally committed to the cause of God. The anointed prophet, for his part, was pre-eminently 'the man of the Spirit';[6] here anointment signified imparting the prophetic spirit.

Via this christ-concept of anointment the originally distinct functions − king, priest and prophet – tended to merge into one another. Because the (originally) royal anointment and the institution of kingship succeeded the judges, the king's anointment also took on the charismatic aspect of the judges, who were moved by the Spirit. 'Yahweh was with them' and God's Spirit rested upon them.[7] When Samuel anointed the king he said that God was with the king and that he himself must be turned towards God − and this, 'in order to deliver Israel'.[8] Thus christ came to imply both 'God with us' and 'man with God', that is, the prototype of the pious worshipper of God: the heart of the christ is 'wholly with Yahweh' (1 Kings 11:14), 'walking before Yahweh with integrity of heart and uprightness' (1 Kings 9:4). For that reason the christ or king was a
[443] 'redeemer': mediator between God and the people. That is what an anointed king should be, say the Deuteronomic chroniclers, disenchanted as they were with the actual behaviour of the anointed kings. Accordingly they tend to harmonize the Davidic christ with Mosaic traits in the ideal image of the royal christ. They depict Moses as the 'suffering servant', 'humbler than every child of man'.[9] This development culminated in the figure of the christ or messiah as the one filled with God's Spirit,[10] a christ concept that could apply to kingly as well as priestly and prophetic figures. It gave rise to two messianic trends: on the one hand a dynastic-Davidic messianism (the Davidic christ), on the other a prophetic messianism (in a yet later tradition fused with non-dynastic features of 'the son of David'): the prophetic christ. Especially in this last trend 'messiah' meant simply the prophet filled with God's Spirit (Zech. 7:12; Neh.

[2] This anointing is then retrojected into the past or is antedated: Ex. 29:30,40; 28:41; Lev. 2:7,8.
[3] Ex. 30:30; 28:41; 40:15; Lev. 7:36; 10:7; Num. 3:3.
[4] 1 Kings 19:16; Ps. 105:15.
[5] 2 Kings 17:26; Jer. 5:4; 8:7.
[6] Hosea 9:7; Is. 48:16; Ezek. 2:2; 11:5.
[7] Judges 6:16; 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:1,19; 15:14; 1 Sam. 11:6; 1 Sam. 10; 1 Sam. 16:13.
[8] 1 Sam. 10: 1, 6, 9.
[9] Deut. 1:36-37; 4:21-22; 34:5; Num. 12:1-2.
[10] See especially the (cited) work by M. Chevallier with some finer points from W. van Unnik.

9:30); christ and *pneuma* possession were synonymous.

Only in later Judaism did this Christ figure assume eschatological significance. Before that people had veered away from looking back to the idealized past, whose concrete reality caused such disillusionment; they now looked forward to a better, hopeful future. Just before, during and after the exile we see the first signs of hope centred on a coming saviour figure. This assumed many different forms. Some were descended from Davidic messianism (Is. 11:1-2), others from prophetism, out of which, still later, the expectation of a coming 'eschatological prophet' was to grow. For this last line a number of trito- and deutero-Isaiahan passages are important; they left a profound mark on the Judaism of Jesus' day and the New Testament. The main passages are these:

'Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him,
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
... a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
... I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness . . .
as a light to the nations' (Is. 42:1-6).

'Listen to me, O coastlands,
and hearken, you peoples from afar.
The Lord called me from the womb,
from the body *of my mother he named my name.*

He made my mouth like a sharp sword, [444]
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.
And he said to me: *you are my servant,*
Israel, *in whom I will be glorified'* (Is. 49:1-3).

'How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good tidings,
who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "*Your God reigns*"' (Is. 52:7).

'This is my covenant with you, says the Lord: *my spirit* which *is upon you*, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of my mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your

children's children, says the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore' (Is. 59:21f).

'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has *anointed* me,
to bring *good tidings to the poor;*
he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn ...' (Is. 61:1-2).

In the Judaism of Jesus' time and in the New Testament the passages cited above come together, as it were, in an anthology. They provide a basis for what Jewish apocalyptic literature calls the christ, an eschatological figure. For he is 'anointed' (Is. 61:1-2), that is, God's Spirit rests upon him (ibid, and Is. 59:21). In Isaiah 42, which subsequently came to be read in a similar perspective, people detected certain Mosaic features of this prophetic christ: he is the great teacher of righteousness − in Judaic terms, the true interpreter of the Law as a revelation of God's will. They associated this with Deut. 18:9-22: a coming 'prophet like Moses'. This christ bears none of the marks of dynastic Davidic messianism: he has been anointed, commissioned by God and sent as his
[445] prophet to bring good news (Is. 52:7 and 61:1-2): God's approaching reign (Is. 52:7) on the one hand − but that also entails Zion's deliverance, salvation and liberation for the wretched and the sorrowful, as well as judgment on the unrighteous (Is. 61:1-2), a judgment pronounced with a tongue 'like a sharp sword' (Is. 49:1-5). The appearance of this prophetic christ brings peace, justice and liberation. It is a coming, prophetic christ figure with certain priestly traits (see Is. 61:6), not a sovereign messiah. In this tradition complex later Judaism sees a christ-figure bringing a gospel, the glad tidings of God's reign and of men's salvation and liberation. It is actually not improbable that in Jesus' day there were anthologies, *testimonia,* in which similar texts were collated, just as in cave 4 at Qumrân selections have been found of biblical (Old Testament) texts which are said to support the idea of a twofold messiah: a priestly messiah and a kingly Davidic one (see below).

But between these texts and later Jewish apocalyptic exegesis lies a whole era that brought fundamental changes in Jewish spirituality. For a time after the exile there was still some prophetic activity (1 Ezra 5:1-2; 1 Macc. 9:54); even so, the absence of prophets in Israel was frequently lamented.[11] The rabbinism of a later period was to regard Haggai, Zechariah and the anonymous Malachi as

[11] This complaint is voiced already in an older source: 1 Sam. 3:1.

the last of the prophets.[12] But the disappearance of the prophets points to something else, a different outlook on prophetism. From being a prophetic movement Judaism now saw Israel as a religion of the sacred book. Scribes, experts in Scripture, took over what had been the prophets' task: to interpret God's will from the signs of the times. Now began the age of biblical hermeneutics (*haggada* and *halakha*). 'And [Ezra] read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and ... gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading' (Neh. 8:8).[13] God's will and message were no longer discovered by living prophets but through hermeneutics of sacred texts, now seen as coming straight from heaven. What had once been prophetism was now found in divinely inspired texts, which the Greek-speaking Jews regarded as 'dictated by God'. Thus 1 Macc. 9:27 says: 'since the time that prophets ceased to appear'. A further consequence of this spiritual revolution was that even the major prophets were subordinated to the 'books of Moses'; they were simply a reminder of God's Torah.[14] After the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) even rabbis were to say that 'since the destruction of the temple the prophetic gift is given over to fools'.[15] In a world dominated by scribes and theologians there was no room for prophets, nor for prophetic messianism. A prophet superior to Moses [446] was blasphemy, as a tradition interpolated later into Deut. 34:10 suggests: 'There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses.' Not till after the exile and the disappearance of the prophets did Moses become the supreme authority in Judaism. Then he became the ideal type: king, law-giver, priest and prophet in one; and the Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora, familiar with the *theios anèr* model, presented Moses as the divine prodigy: 'He was subsumed into the divine, so that he became akin to God, and truly godlike,' says Philo[16] − this apropos an exodus tradition that speaks of Moses being caught up to God.

It follows that a 'non-scribal', charismatic and truly prophetic kind of public ministry, like those of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth who revived the powerful impulse of the great prophets,[17] would be perceived as a threat and a provocation by the official establishment and its representatives.

All the same, apart from legalistic biblical exegesis, there were also charismatic interpretations of the prophetic books.[18] This was where prophetism continued, albeit in an apocalyptic perspective in keeping with the

[12] J. Bonsirven, *Le judaisme palestinien,* vol. I, XXVI-XXX.
[13] R. Le Déaut, *Les études targumiques,* in ETL 44 (1968) (5-34), 5.
[14] Strack-Billerbeck, I, 601.
[15] J. Gibler, *Messie prophéte,* 98.
[16] *'Transmutatur in divinum, ita ut fiat Deo cognatus, vereque divinus'* (*Quaest. In Exodum,* II, 29). See Josephus, *Antiquitates,* 2:201-204, 233, 331; 4:326, who describes Moses explicitly as a *'theios anèr'*. See J. Giblet, *Messie prophète,* 101, and J. Jeremias, sub *Moyses,* in ThWNT 4, 852-853.
[17] See G. von Rad, *Die Botschaft der Propheten* (Munich 1967).
[18] M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leyden-Cologne 1961), 240-242; J. Giblet, *Messie prophète,* 122.

spirit of the times. Daniel − and a good deal of non-canonical literature − are evidence of that. We have mentioned that God's Spirit was a gift of the last days;[19] but Joel puts it very forcefully: in those days the whole of Israel will be a nation of prophets (3:1-5). Particularly in circles where there was a burgeoning conviction that the end of the world was at hand, possession of the *pneuma* was seen as the beginning of the end-time. Hence alongside official Judaism all sorts of popular movements arose, nurtured on the old prophetic texts channelled through apocalyptic exegesis. This was the matrix of notions of coming eschatological saviour figures, whose form is not always clear. Under the Hasmonean dynasty the functions of king and high priest became united in a single person (still not a 'son of David'), albeit only provisionally (while awaiting a better prophetic resolution, 1 Macc 14:25-49). As a result the christ concept of 'the anointed one' became nebulous.

Popular disenchantment with the Hasmonean dynasty, which brought some prosperity but ignored the lot of the nation, awakened a longing in various popular movements for a mighty divine intervention by God. Under the Roman occupation this grew into universal certainty, supported by the
[447] apocalyptic spirit of the times. God was about to send a great prophet.

Davidic messianic expectations of an approaching saviour figure were waxing (see below), along with expectations of an end-time christ prophet, which charismatic exegesis helped to foster. For in these circles people could only recognize the 'time of salvation', only identify the messiah − royal or prophetic − on the basis of scriptural texts interpreted as prophecy. Prophetic exegesis and an end-time saviour figure were tied up together: the prophetic exegete read historical events in light of the sacred books and thus identified the coming christ (as did the first Jewish Christians). According to the Jewish historiographer (Flavius) Josephus a prophet during the Jewish war foretold, on the basis of certain passages in Daniel, the exact week in which God would intervene and bring deliverance; and, says Josephus, when they stormed the temple in A.D. 70 the Romans found 6000 Jews inside it, awaiting God's advent.[20] Acts 5:35-39 alludes to similar christ identifications; and the gospels are full of reminiscence of prophetic or Davidic christ expectations of 'the one to come'.[21]

These popular hopes also found literary, elite expression in all manner of Jewish apocalyptic literature both before and after the time of Jesus Christ. Highlights in this process were the mid-fifties before Christ and the latter half of the first century; after 70 (the fall of Jerusalem) apocalypticism flowered

[19] Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26-27.
[20] *De bello Judaico* 6:285-6, cited in M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten,* 249. Apoc. 11:1-2 could very well be an allusion to this prophecy.
[21] Mt. 3:11; 11:3,9,14; Lk. 3:16; 7:19,20b; Jn. 1:15,21, especially 6:14-15.

anew (the period in which all the gospels, with the probable exception of Mark, were written along with many other New Testament documents).[22] Eschatological saviour mediators are not the focal figures in this apocalyptic literature (sometimes they do not feature at all); the spotlight is on the radical transformation of the old world into a new world, in which intermediary figures are often secondary. The expositor of the ancient prophets is the apocalyptic author himself; he is a 'revealer', who unveils for initiates secrets about the future imparted by God. He is a charismatic biblical exegete with no authority of his own, so he records his visions and prophecies, his exposition of the Bible (eschatological exegesis) in the name of the great prophets of the past: Moses, Daniel, Ezra, Enoch, Elijah and so forth; for they provide an 'exegesis' of what stands written about them in the sacred books. Thus it is not their own interpretation, but an eschatological exposition of these ancient books. That is why apocalyptic exegesis is essentially pseudonymous. Above all it focuses on biblical figures said to have been 'taken up', that is, taken before or after their death to be with God (particularly Enoch and Elijah, but also Moses). Malachi (itself an anonymous anthology) already said: 'Behold, I [448] send my messenger to prepare the way before me... Behold, he is coming, says the Lord ... Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes' (3:1; 4:5; **see** also Ecclesiasticus [Sirach] 48:10-11). Here in an Old Testament passage Elijah *redivivus* is declared the prophet of the last days. A charismatic interpretation of Deut. 18:15-18 presages the appearance of an end-time 'prophet like Moses' (Elijah and Moses are Jesus' companions in the transfiguration narrative). In this literature, then, a wide variety of eschatological saviour figures crops up, the idea of the coming Elijah or, more vaguely, 'the one to come' being the most widespread among the people.

In Judaism eschatological prophets are individuals to whom God assigns a special task in the end-time, either as forerunners of the actual eschatological saviour figure or as the solitary mighty figure destined to emerge in the end-time. There were five variants.

(a) The eschatological prophet/miracle worker. In this context 'miracles' legitimize the prophetic mission and signify the dawn of the time of salvation. This type includes mainly (more or less) Zealotic, anti-Roman propagandists. Rehearsing the marvellous events of the exodus is typical of these eschatological prophets: the manna miracle is repeated, also the parting of the river Jordan[23] and the Isaiahan marvels from the exodus tradition (Is. 40:4-5).

[22] As compared with these two climaxes, more than half a century before Jesus, and somewhat less than a half-century after Jesus, Jesus' own time was a quiet one as far as apocalyptic literature is concerned. We should not shift the feverish outburst of apocalypticism after the fall of Jerusalem (with its obvious influence on a great part of the New Testament) back into Jesus' own lifetime.

[23] Syrian Apoc. Baruch 29:4-8; 4 Ezra 13:43-44.

One of these prophets was Theudas under the Roman procurator Cuspius Fadus (A.D. 44-46; see Acts 5:36); he promised to repeat the Jordan miracle.[24] Under the procurator Felix an Egypto-Jewish eschatological wonder-working prophet predicted that the walls of Jerusalem would be razed,[25] as Jericho had fallen long before (Josh. 6); under Festus an eschatological prophet led his followers into the wilderness, promising miracles and deliverance from all affliction.[26]

(b) The eschatological saviour figure of Elijah *redivivus,* already foreshadowed by Malachi (3:1 with 3:23-24), whose task was to restore the twelve tribes (Ecclesiasticus 48:10; see Is. 49:6), was not the forerunner of the messianic eschatological figure, but was personally preparing a way for God. Yet even in the pre-Christian period the eschatological Elijah was associated with the great political expectations of the nation, hence was already turned into a precursor of the messiah. The Christian identification of John the Baptist
[449] with the precursor of Jesus the Christ was based on an existing model (e.g. in Qumrân).

(c) The messianic end-time prophet. This is a contamination between two tradition complexes, namely Davidic messianism and 'eschatological prophet', primarily dynastic and non-messianic. In a secondary stage the two traditions converged.[27] This category includes all sorts of pretender messiahs, associating the end-time prophet with dominion.

(d) There is also the end-time 'prophet like Moses', especially in Qumrân,[28] even with explicit reference to Deut. 18:15-18. This, too, was originally a separate, non-messianic prophet figure; but eventually he, too, came to be linked, apparently as a forerunner, with the end-time messiah(s). The 'prophet like Moses' of the last days was to fulfil the Law and validly interpret it. The Samaritans and Essenes, who both nurtured − although independently − the idea of the eschatological Moses prophet, must have drawn on shared earlier traditions. An important point here is the connection between Law and eschatological prophet, the teacher and true expositor of the Law.

(e) Finally, in the period after Christ there is the eschatological Moses *redivivus.* This relates not to an eschatological interpretation of Deut. 18:15-18 but to the 'rapture' of Moses himself, Moses taken up to live with God and returning at the close of the age; this is the only conception that is not pre-Christian (even the New Testament passages − Mk. 9:2ff; Rev. 11:3ff − cannot be interpreted in the sense of an eschatological Moses *redivivus*); it was a later rabbinic angle.

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[24] Josephus, *Antiquitatum Judaicarum libri* (=*Antiquitates)* 20: 97-98.
[25] Josephus, *De bello Judaico,* 2:26ff; *Antiquitates,* 20: 169-170.
[26] *Antiquitates,* 20: 188.
[27] F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 353-4; Kl. Berger, 'Die königlichen Messiastraditionen', 1-45.
[28] Ibid., 366ff.

Conclusion. Thus Judaism presents two types of end-time prophet as precursors of the messianic saviour figure or the coming of God's reign at the close of the age: the messenger of the 'day of God', that is, the judgment (Mal. 3:1), promptly identified with the Elijah *redivivus* (Mal. 3:23,24) and 'a prophet like Moses' (Judaic exegesis of Deut. 18:15-18), but in such way that the substantive differences between the two types are sometimes blurred. In the story of the transfiguration Jesus appears flanked by the eschatological Moses and Elijah, suggesting that their respective functions and significance in Judaism did not wholly coincide. Moses is a genuine lawgiver, whereas (in Judaism) the prophet is a teacher and interpreter of the Law. However, the distinction between the eschatological prophet and the messiah of the Davidic dynasty is sharply drawn and maintained, even though that prophet could also be called 'messianic' in a religious sense: christ, the one anointed with God's Spirit, and ultimately even 'son of David'.

B. THE END-TIME MESSIANIC SON OF DAVID [450]

Literature. (See above, under 'eschatological prophet'). Further: Kl. Berger, 'Die königlichcn Messiastraditionen des Neuen Testaments', NTS 20 (1973-1974), 1-45; J. Blank, *Paulus und Jesus* (Munich 1968), 250-255; M. Chevallier, *L'Esprit et le Messie dans le bas Judaisme et le Nouveau Testament (*Paris 1958); H. Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* 91-94 and 149-150; J. Coppens, *Le messianisme royal. Ses origines. Son développement. Son accomplissement* (Lectio Divina, 54) (Paris 1969); O. Cullmann, *Christologie,* 111-137; D. Duling, 'The promises to David and their entrance into Christianity', NTS 20 (1973-1974), 55-77; J. Fitzmyer, 'The son of David tradition and Matt. 22, 41-6 and Parellels', Conc 2 (1966), n. 10, 40-47; P. Grelot, *Le Messie dans les apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament,* RechBibl (Louvain 1962), 24-28; F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 242-279; R. Koch, 'Der Gottesgeist und der Messias', Bibl 27 (1946), 241-268 and 376-403; K. Kuhn, 'Die Beiden Messias Aaron und Israels', NTS 1 (1954-1955), 168-179; U. B. Muller, *Messias und Menschensohn in jüdischen Apokalypsen und in der Offenbarung des Johannes* (Gütersloh 1972); G. Schneider, 'Die Davidssohnfrage (Mk. 12:35-37)', Bibl 53 (1972), 65-90, and 'Zur Vorgeschichte des christologischen Prädikats "Sohn Davids"', TrThZ 80 (1971), 247-253; D. Scholem, *The messianic idea in Judaism* (New York 1971); K. Schubert, *Vom Messias zum Christum* (Vienna 1964); J. Starcky, 'Les quatre étapes de messianisme à Qumrân', RB 70 (1963), 481-505; W. C. van Unnik, 'Jesus the Christ', NTS 8 (1961-1962), 101-116, and 'Dominus vobiscum', *New Testament essays* (in memory of T. W. Manson), ed. A. Higgins (Manchester 1959), 270-288; *L'Attente du Messie* (Paris-Bruges 1954); G. Voss, *Die Christologie der lukanischen Schriften in Grundzügen* (Studia Neotcstamentica, Studia 2) (Paris-Bruges 1965).

(a) National, dynastic 'Davidic messianism'

As the notion of creation broadened, especially in deutero-Isaiah when Yahweh opened up the whole world to Israel, as it were, and showed his power over the nations,[29] the belief was engendered that God himself was going to rule (Ps. 47; 93; 95-99; 22:29; Ma1.1:14). This universal, kingly rule Yahweh would exercise through Israel (Is. 43: 15; 44:6). But a vice regent – naturally Israel's own king − would reign on earth in his stead. In due course this kingdom came to be described as eschatological, belonging to 'the close of
[451] the age' (Is. 24:23; 33:22; Zech. 14:9, 16; Obadiah 21). So we find (in fairly late texts) that people were beginning to look out for an eschatological Davidic world ruler. This expectation arose after the exile in Judah, where under Persian domination a new community had been formed. Thus hope of a coming king at the close of the age, one who would wield God's reign on earth, emerged at a time when eschatological ideas were rife, and in circles which, favouring a Davidic king, hoped that the coming messiah would hail from the deposed dynasty of David. Old Testament passages expressing this messianic expectation are the following: Is. 9:1-6; 11:1-10 (from the stem of Jesse or the Davidic dynasty); 16:5; − Jer. 23:5-6 (33:15-16) (a scion of the house of David); Ezek. 17:22-24 (a twig of the topmost shoots) − Mic. 5:1-3 (Bethlehem, city of the family or house of David); Hagg. 2:20-23 (Zerubbabel is the expected messiah), also Zech. 6:9-15; − when Zerubbabel became king and Joshua high priest there arose the prospect of a shared messianic office: a royal and a high-priestly messiah: Zech. 4; − finally, Zech. 9:9-10 (triumphal entry of the royal messiah into Jerusalem). These are the strictly Old Testament messianic promises regarding the coming son of David. (In Qumrân and in the New Testament the 'Emmanuel' of Is. 7:14 is also interpreted from this perspective, although the original allusion was to a looming disaster.)

This shows that the Davidic messianic expectation is not a key tenet in the Old Testament and is confined, moreover, to certain circles. Almost all the aforementioned texts come from the post-exilic period of the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ. There is no reference to this Davidic saviour figure as 'the messiah'; he is anointed king, of course; 'the anointed one' is a synonym for the (reigning) king; thus the Persian king Cyrus, too, is simply 'the anointed one' (i.e. the king, Is. 45:1). In other words, the messiah as an end-time saviour figure belonging to the Davidic dynasty is unknown in the Old Testament. Later (see above) when priests and prophets were also anointed the term 'anointed one' came to express a very intimate relationship of an (anointed) individual with God. Hence when the title 'messiah' came to denote the coming, eschatological Davidic saviour figure, this too signified someone

[29] Th.C. Vriezen, *Hoofdlijnen der theologie van het Oude Testament* (Wageningen 1966[3]).

who had a very special relation to Yahweh, in accordance with the Old Testament concept of anointment (christ).

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah thought that king Zerubbabel, king Joachim's uncle living in Jerusalem, would be this royal messiah. But when nothing came of that, there was more circumspect talk of an offshoot of the tree [452] of Jesse, a descendant of the old Bethlehem line of the ancient dynasty of David.

Not until after the Maccabean rebellion did 'the messiah' of the eschatological period in Israel become, in late Judaism, a very specific expectation about the future. In the Hellenistic period most people felt no need at all of a Davidic king; what is more, many groups in Israel were not in the least eschatologically minded; Judaism was an established religion. Ardent future expectations were confined to eschatological groups, but without any messianic interest. Even the future-oriented Essenes initially had no messianic expectations. It was among the Pharisees that a 'royal' messianism emerged, as the psalms of Solomon illustrate (Ps. Sol. 17-18); they hoped for the messiah, an eschatological saviour figure of the house of David who would deliver Israel. The idea could only have arisen in circles which still had an interest in restoring the Jewish royal house of David − as evidenced by allusions to the Old Testament in the psalms of Solomon[30] − and at the same time had an eschatological outlook. The effect of the concrete situation − Palestine was governed by the 'unlawful' line of Hasmonean kings − revived old hopes. Handing down the messianic tradition was essentially a matter for the scribes; but at critical moments in history this could generate an impulse to realize it in the current situation. The first indication of a messianic expectation is in the psalms of Solomon. This longing was engendered by the conflict between the Hasmonean high priests and the Pharisees. The latter, who represented the old Chasidic school, refused to accept Jonathan, who had been unlawfully installed as high priest. Under John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.) the conflict with the Pharisees intensified. He had united in his person Israel's three major sources or centres of authority: prophet, high priest and king. When Aristobulus I assumed the royal diadem and the high priest Alexander Jannai (103-76 B.C.) put the title 'king' on Israel's coinage it was too much for the Pharisees; this was blasphemy: a high priest was not permitted to be king. Not the tribe of Levi but that of Judah alone had a right to kingship. It provoked the vehement protest in Ps. Sol. 17:5-6; Ps. Sol. 17:7-8 goes on to depict God's imminent judgment, linking with it the hopeful expectation of the messiah as Israel's king, the bringer of eschatological deliverance. Thus the messianic movement had its origins in the abuse of power and infringement of Jewish law during

[30] 2 Sam. 7:12-16 → Ps. Sal. 17:4; Ps. 2:9 → Ps. Sal. 17:22-24; Ps. 110:5-6 → Ps. Sal. 17:22; Isa. 11:1-9 → Ps. Sal. 17:23a, 23-28; Mic. 5:4 → Ps. Sal. 17:40, etc.

the Hasmonean period.[31] That explains why the first traces of messianism
[453] among the Qumrân Essenes (who were also opposed to the Hasmonean high priest but withdrew into the wilderness) as well as in the *Testamentum Levi* 17 and 18 indicate an eschatological priestly messianism in reaction to the Hasmonean priest-king. Eschatological Davidic messianism appears to have been an expectation which on the one hand reacted against the degeneration of the high-priestly office and so propounded a priestly messianism; on the other hand it reacted against the degeneration of the kingship, and so centred its hope on a final messiah of the royal Davidic line. The first strain is clearly apocalyptic, focused on the future, the second is restorative. Hence the two messianic schools had different eschatological expectations.[32] Both seem to have run a similar course and to have emerged in the same period (Ps. Sol. and Test. Levi both presuppose the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey – hence the events of the year 63 B.C.). The Qumrân Essenes put the emphasis on a high-priestly messianism, the Pharisees on royal messianism. In the same period that saw the rise of messianism there was also, besides an emphasis on the Chasidic notion of the approaching kingdom of God (Dan. 3:45; 4:31; 5:27, etc.), the emergence of the resurrection concept.

Among the Qumrân Essenes the dual character of messianism developed in a distinctive fashion. New members at Qumrân apparently brought Pharisaic ideas with them to the Essene community; and the Pharisees espoused the Davidic type of messianic expectation. In 4Q-Testimonia from Qumrân there is mention in this period of a coming prophet and also of two messiahs, the high-priestly Aaron messiah and the royal Israel messiah, 'expounded' from Deut. 18:15-18 (prophet), from Num. 24: 15-17 (star of Jacob: Israel messiah) and Deut. 33:8-11 (blessing of Levi: Aaron messiah),[33] though without actual mention of the name 'messiah'. A similar passage in 1QS 9:11 does refer explicitly to two messiahs and one eschatological prophet. The high-priestly 'last' messiah rates higher than the king messiah (considering the anti-Hasmonean attitude of these Essenes and the Levitical origin of their grand master). It is a moot point whether these two messianic functions could or could not be fulfilled by one person. In the Pharisaically oriented *Testamentum XII Patriarcharum* (towards the end of John Hyrcanus' reign) we also read about a twofold messiah figure − from Levi and Judah.[34] A clear tendency appears to merge Pharisaic Davidic messianism with high-priestly messianism

[31] Müller, *Messias,* 72-80.
[32] Ibid., 79-80.
[33] P. Grelot, *Le messie dans les apocryphes,* l.c., 24-28.
[34] According to Starcky, *Quatre étapes,* 490-1, the dual messiah-figure is a compromise between the actual situation (a non-Davidic, Hasmonean king) and the *'de iure'* principle (the prophetic promises to Judah). Again in Jubilees 31:9-20 (from Chasidic circles) we hear tell of a Levi-messiah and a Judah- messiah.

− a purpose fully achieved in Qumrân at the beginning of the Roman occupation. The dual messiah figure disappears: the sole coming messiah is the redeemer of Aaron and Israel, alongside the eschatological prophet faithful to the Law, who is probably identified with the returning teacher of righteousness.[35] Somewhat later, in 4QarP, the eschatological prophet is identified with the coming Elijah of Mal. 3:23, who becomes the precursor of the one messiah. The situation after 63, then, was that (partly under Pharisaic influence) the Essenes expected a single messiah, with the eschatological prophet, faithful keeper of the Law, as his precursor. [454]

When the Essenes, after a period of absence owing to an earthquake and non-persecution under Herod the Great, returned to Qumrân after his death during the troubled years of rebellion under Archelaus and the Roman procurators, certain anti-Roman, more or less Zealotic elements accompanied them. This was when the Scroll of War was written, in which militant Davidic messianism reached a zenith. 4Q *Florilegium*[36] alludes to the coming messianic son of David together with the law-observing last prophet, while the functions of the royal messiah now take precedence over the high-priestly messianic functions (although the messiah is still a priest-king).

Such, then, were the Qumrânic expectations, which make no mention of a coming son of man. The parable book of Enoch 37-71, the major evidence for the son-of-man expectation, was unknown in Qumrân; and nowhere in the Qumrân literature (according to expert opinion) do we find a clear allusion to the son of man. The culminating point – and the situation of Essene messianic expectation in Jesus' day − was hopeful expectation of a Davidic king(-priest) messiah, 'engendered by God', with allusions to Ps. 2 and Ps. 110. In addition references to Dan. 7:13-14 (a 'heavenly figure') and Is. 9:5 and 7:14 (the Emmanuel − according to the Greek − born of a virgin) might suggest that, when all is said and done, a virgin birth of a messiah descending out of heaven may have been a pre-Christian, Jewish concept associated with Davidic messianism.[37] The traditions of the messiah and the son of man influenced each other. In Qumrân, however, there is no hint of either the son of man or the messiah as Yahweh's 'suffering servant'.

The revival of the royal messianism of the son of David, and its prominent position in Jesus' time, was the work of the Pharisees (who influenced Qumrân) as well as the nationalist resistance fighters, the Sicarii and the Zealots in particular.[38] For the Zealots God alone was leader of Israel and Israel

[35] QD 19:10-11; 20:1; 12:23; 14:19; also 7:18-21; 19:35-20,1; see Starcky, *Quatre étapes,* l.c., 495. 497.
[36] Publ. in JBL 77 (1958), 350-354.
[37] 4 Q Mess ar: see Starcky, ibid., 502-504.
[38] M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten,* l.c.; S. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester 1967), with: *'Jesus and the Zealots?:* A correction', in NTS 17 (1970), 453. More detailed discussion: G. Baumbach, 'Zeloten und Sikarier', in ThLZ 90 (1965), 727-740, and 'Die Zeloten', in BuL 41 (1968), 2-19; C. Daniel,

[455] was God's possession. Hence foreign occupation was against God himself. The pith of Jewish resistance was the religious conviction about God's absolute and supreme rule over Israel, which sprang from the very heart of Jewish belief. Thus paying tax to a Roman emperor was felt to be impious. That was the universal Jewish conviction; the pragmatic question was: what to do in such circumstances? The official leaders of the nation and their entourage − Herodians and the aristocratic Sadducees − opted for far-reaching collaboration; the democratic Pharisees favoured moral resistance within outward obedience that could at least preserve what was essential, the Jewish law. The 'wilderness people' withheld all cooperation, even outward, but fled into the desert in order to found an ideal order within their own community and lead an 'angelic life', in anticipation of the coming kingdom;[39] they knew that through their prayer and Bible study (eschatological exegesis), waiting for divine intervention from above, they were provoking God to action. That is why – apart from practical and tactical reasons! − they chose the wilderness, the country of the exodus, Israel's blessed era without a king on the way to the promised land under God's sole leadership. That was the position of the Essenes, to which the Qumrân group belonged. In A.D. 70 and 72/73 the latter were totally exterminated (the survivors committed suicide).[40] Other radicals chose the way of subversive military resistance (though moved by the same religio-Jewish inspiration): the Sicarii and the Zealots, the former prompted partly by social and economic hardship, the latter out of zeal for the temple of God, now under the control of an illicit priesthood. They were fortified in their struggle by their belief in resurrection. In between these factions lay the broad mass of people, subject to all kinds of influences, passive and yet stirred by obscure feelings of expectancy and hope. They applauded the activists when successful but disowned the resistance fighters when things went wrong. The Zealots and the Sicarii were driven by the same basic impulses as the populace: the restoration of Israel in a kingdom independent of foreigners, authentically Jewish and faithful to the Law. Traces of this popular expectation can also be found in the New Testament (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:28; 24:21; Rev. 1:6, etc.).[41]

'Esséniens, zélotes et sicaires et leur mention par paronymie dans le Nouveau Testament', in *Numen* 13 (1966), 88-105; M. Maccoby, 'Jesus and Barabbas', in NTS 16 (1969), 55-60; M. Smith, 'Zealots and Sicarii. Their origins and relation', in HThR 1 (1971), 1-20; H.P. Kingdom, 'The origins of the Zealots', in NTS 19 (1972-3), 74-81.

[39] S. van der Woude, *Qumrân,* l.c., 218.

[40] See Y. Yadin, *Masada. Der letzte Kamf um die Festung des Herodes* (Hamburg 1967). Of the Qumran Essenes who escaped, some later became Christians. With a terminology possibly derived from Qumran, the Christians too were called, in some Christian circles, 'followers of the Way' (see Acts 9:2; 18:25-26; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22).

[41] Nonetheless, one should beware of modern eschatological misconceptions – not only in general (see J. Carmignac, 'Les dangers de l'eschatologie', in NTS 17 [1970-71] 365-90), but also in particular. The fact that Jews and Christians at that time lived in expectation of being the last generation does not imply 'the end of the world' in the modern sense of the phrase. True,

The Zealots' expectations of a Davidic messiah reached a climax in the Jewish war (66-70) and later in the rebellion led by Bar Kochba (A.D. 135). Part of the background to the Jewish war was charismatic exegesis of the Bible, according to various secular sources that refer to an oracle allegedly predicting 'a coming, Jewish world ruler'.[42] This suggests that among the Jews the [456] expectation of the imminent arrival of a Jewish world ruler was universal at the time. Josephus refers to 'a star out of Jacob' (Num. 24:17ff), a familiar notion in Zealotic circles; but M. Hengel[43] thinks Num. 24:15-19 is more likely: 'This is the oracle of Balaam − of the one allowed to see secret things. I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not nigh; a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel [...]. Israel shall deploy power. And the one who comes out of Jacob shall have dominion' (Num. 24:17,19,21). Numbers 24, read with Dan. 7:13-14, prompted the Zealots' recognition that the days were fulfilled and the messiah could be identified.

(b) Prophetic sapiential 'Davidic messianism'

It is clear even from the Qumrân literature that at a later stage the initial conflict centring on the Hasmonean king-priest ceased to be the key issue; the focus now shifted to *theologoumena* and their own sort of eschatological messianic expectations. In the traditions sustained and handed down by historically minded circles prophetic and late sapiential strands converged; and so there arose a quite new messianism of 'the son of David'. The son of David in the Old Testament (apart from Absalom) is primarily king Solomon. In Pharisaic circles, which had produced the so-called *Psalmi Salomonis*, the eschatological son of David assumed character traits of Solomon the wise, whose seamier side was 'edited out' as early as 2 Chron. 1:1-9, 31. Remarkably, the whole of wisdom literature was passed down under the name of Solomon. 'Wisdom' *is* Solomon, son of David! According to 1 Kings 4:29 Solomon received from God 'wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and largeness of mind like the sand on the seashore'. He possessed not only enormous knowledge of nature (1 Kings 4:33), but according to the Book of Wisdom (7:20b) also 'the powers of spirits and the reasonings of men'; he had 'the discernment of spirits', and the *Testamentum Salomonis* likewise ascribed

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'eschatological' at that time, especially when associated with messianism, did imply something transcendent but still within this world, albeit in a completely new order. Even in the New Testament there are various pointers to very peculiar interpretations *vis-à-vis* modern Christian ones. A typical feature is that many Christians expected the rule of God promised by Jesus Christ, to be for those who were still alive ('this generation'; one generation was then equivalent to a period of fifty years): Mt. 10:23; Mk. 9:1; Acts 1:6; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; and so they were afraid that those already dead would have no part in it (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

[42] Josephus, *De bello Judaico,* 6, 212-313; Tacitus, *Historiae,* 5:13; Suetonius, *Vespasianus,* 4: 5; see M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten,* l.c., 245.

[43] *Antiquitates,* 10: 210; 4: 114 and 4: 116-117.

lordship over demons to the son of David (3:4; 15:3). Expelling demons and performing exorcisms are said by the Jewish historian Josephus[44] to be the characteristic activity of Solomon, son of David. Thus in Greco-Jewish quarters the son of David was celebrated as a great miracle worker and exorcist, a mighty and wise king, initiated into divine knowledge. Every demon knew the name of Solomon, son of David. The expression 'king Solomon, son of David,
[457] have mercy on me' was current in those circles.[45] Solomon was son of David, prophet and miracle worker; and this is illustrated in a context of authority over demons. In the Old Testament Ps. 72 the figure of the true king is obviously blended with this Solomonic image: a peaceful king who brings *shalom* and to whom every power on earth is subject. A broad Jewish tradition connects the title 'son of David' with cures and exorcisms: he is the true king, filled with wisdom, an exorcist, a prophet − in short, son of God. For the time being the mystery of his person remains hidden from other men.

The question raised by this temporary concealment is, where did he get his powers? Does the son of David have the *pneuma* of God or of Beelzebub? Apocalyptically − how else indeed? − history was seen as a battle between good and evil powers. Both work miracles, God's anointed as well as his 'gainsayer' or opponent. In this same, relatively closed tradition the question of legitimation is crucial. The criterion of spirit discernment is whether miracles are performed 'out of wisdom' or simply for personal advantage. Wisdom is bound up with authority or *exousia,* the authority of whoever sent the 'wise one': the pure or the impure *pneuma.* Here the prophetic tradition clearly merges with that of the son of David. The messianic miracle worker is put to the test: 'If the righteous man is God's son' (Wis. 2:18), then God will help him and save him from the hand of his enemies. The son of David and 'king of the Jews' is he who shares God's dominion; and this is evident in his total authority over demons and all the elements.[46] This was anticipated in the late Jewish conception of Moses: Moses was king of the whole nation because he had full authority to do miracles, while the demonic elements of the world obeyed him; indeed he is 'the God and king of all peoples'.[47] In the wisdom literature, after all, the wise man possesses 'the whole world'. All this is set in a tradition in which the priestly and royal messiah are fused and the emphasis shifts to the deutero-Isaiahan anointed prophet.[48] The national, dynastic type of Davidic messianism highlights the judgment, which will destroy Israel's enemies. But the actual task of passing judgment belongs to this prophetic

[44] *Antiquitates,* 8: 44-49; *Test. Salomonis,* 16:3. See Kl. Berger, *Die königlichen Messiastraditionen,* 7, n. 29.
[45] *Test. Salomonis,* 20:1.
[46] Berger, l.c., 22.
[47] *Vita Moysis,* 1: 158; Berger, l.c., 23, n. 89.
[48] *Jubilees,* 31: 15; *Joseph and Asenath,* 22; *Test. Levi,* 18: 1,3. See Apoc. 11:3ff.

messiah; because his authority was spurned by his opponents, the end will reveal their mistake; the martyrdom suffered by the messianic prophet will be the indictment, testimony and verdict against his opponents.[49] Thus the messianic prophet *is* the coming judge; ultimately he will exercise the royal judgment. In addition, as prophet of wisdom he is called 'Son of God', *doulos* (servant) of God, and *pais Theou* (child of God): in the prophetic sapiential [458] tradition these three titles are synonymous (sec Wis. 2:13,16d,18 and 9:4b,5a). As a recipient of God's wisdom this prophet, who is to exercise the eschatological function of the royal judge, is called God's beloved, *agapètos*; for the heavens have opened above him: he has received God's wisdom and revelation, God's Spirit.

This messiah is to manifest himself only in Jerusalem:[50] just as Simon the Maccabee, after conquering the city (of Gezer), showed mercy, established a compassionate order, cleansed all the houses of idols and entered the city amid songs of praise and thanksgiving, jubilation and the waving of palm branches (1 Macc. 13:46-48a and 13:50-51).

Wis. 2:19 says explicitly that the wise one will only enter into his *basileia* or kingship through suffering. Only after his rescue by God will it be possible to confess him with the acclamation: this is truly a son of God (Wis. 2:18);, in other words, the '*eschata* of the righteous' (Wis. 2:16c) will vindicate the righteous or wise one (Wis. 5:1ff; 18:13).[51] The Book of Wisdom merges and synthesizes a great many originally independent traditions under the concept of the imparting of divine wisdom to his messenger, the messiah, the son of God. In the process Israel's royal messianism was clearly profoundly altered by the Hellenistic conception of a king, now reinterpreted by Greek-speaking Jews against a background of the more authentically Jewish, prophetic and sapiential traditions.

Within the sapiential tradition complex one can still discern, following Kl. Berger, a dual *basileia* concept:[52] (a) God's reign will be realized through knowledge of God and radical change (see Lk. 17:20-21), and (b) after his death the righteous one will be king. The wise one is king of the universe;[53] on the other hand: the martyr is a child of God, who after his death inherits a heavenly crown.[54]

In this Jewish tradition a concept emerges in which the messiah is a non-political, end-time saviour figure, so it would be wrong to claim that only the

[49] L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende Gerechte?* (SBS, 59) (Stuttgart 1972), 54-56.
[50] Ezra 13:55; 5 Ezra 2:40,42,47. Cf. Lk. 19:11; Rom. 11:26f; Berger, l.c., 31.
[51] Also Philo, *Prob. liber,* 117; *Test. Dan.,* 5: 13.
[52] . Berger, l.c., 36-37.
[53] Prov. 8:15; 4:8-9; *Test. Levi,* 13:9.
[54] 2 Macc. 7:34. See Rev. 21:7; Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:11.

politico-national messiah is typically Jewish.[55] This prophetic sapiential strand does afford, partly on the basis of the deutero-Isaiahan 'end-time christ', messiah or anointed one (to whom we nonetheless apply the non-Isaiahan title 'son of David'), a Jewish reinterpretation of the older royal messianism of Israel.

Conclusion, The 'Davidic messianism' of the Jewish period in which Jesus lived
[459] clearly comprised two strands: (a) a political and national messianism, centred on the Davidic dynasty, which among the Pharisees exhibits mainly spiritual traits and their orientation is different from that of the Zealots or even of Qumrân, and (b) a non-political Davidic messianism, merged with both the deutero-Isaiahan eschatological, anointed prophet and with the sapiential elaboration of the older Deuteronomic concept of 'messenger'; *this* 'Davidic messianism' had universal features. In both cases the Davidic messiah was called 'son of God', but in the second, prophetic sapiential strand, the son, servant or child, initiated into wisdom and knowledge of God by his father, is clearly evident.

C. THE SON OF MAN

Literature, (a) General surveys of the exegetical discussions: G. Haufe, 'Das Menschensohn-Problem in der gegenwärtigen wissenschaftlichen Diskussion', EvTh 26 (1966), 130-141; I. H. Marshall, 'The synoptic son of man sayings in recent discussion', NTS 12 (1965-1966), 327-351, and 'The son of man in contemporary debate', EvQ 42 (1970), 67-87; R. Maddox, 'Methodenfragen in der Menschensohn-forschung', EvTh 32 (1972), 143-160. – (b) *Monografieën:* H. R. Balz, *Methodische Probleme der neutestamentlichen Christologie* (Neukirchen 1967), 61-112; F. H. Borsch, *The son of man in myth and history* (London 1967); and *The Christian and Gnostic son of man* (London 1970); R. Bultmann, *Tradition;* C. Colpe, '*Huios tou anthrôpou*', ThWNT 8 (1967), 403-481; J. Coppens and L. Dequeker, 'Le fils de l'homme et les saints du Très-Haut en Daniel, dans les apocryphes et dans Ie nouveau testament', *Anal. Lov. Bibl. Orient.* III, 23 (Bruges 1961); H. Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* 151-156; O. Cullmann, *Christologie,* 138-198; F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 13-53; M. D. Hooker, *The son of man in Mark* (London 1967); R. Leivestad, 'Exit the apocalyptic son of man?', NTS 18 (1971-1972), 243-267; W. Marxsen, *Anfangsprobleme,* 20-34; U. Müller, *Messias und Menschensohn in jüdischen Apokalypsen und in der Offenbarung des Johannes* (Studien zum NT) (Gütersloh 1972); N. Perrin, 'The Christology of Mark. A study in methodology', JRel 51 (1971), 173-187, and the studies preparatory to it: 'The son of man in ancient Judaism and primitive Christianity', BRes 11

[55] Thus F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 264, n. 6.

(1968), 1-12; 'The son of man in the synoptic tradition', ibid., 13 (1968), 1-23; 'The creative use of the son of man traditions by Mark', UnSQR 23 (1967-1968), 357-365, and 'Mark 14:62: end-product of a Christian *pesher*-tradition', NTS 12 (1965-1966), 150-155; and L. E. Keck, 'Mark 3:7-12 and Mark's Christology', JBL 84 (1965), 341-358; Th. Preiss, 'Le fils de l'homme', *Études thêologiques et religieuses* 26 (1951), 3-76; E. Schweizer, 'Der Menschensohn', ZNW 50 (1959), 185-209; E. Sjöberg, *Der verborgene Menschensohn in den Evangelien* (Lund 1955); H. M. Teeple, 'The origin of the son of man', JBL 84 (1965), 213-250; H. H. Tödt, *Der Menschensohn;* Ph. Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 55-91 and 92-140. [460]

(1) Perhaps no New Testament concept has been so much debated without reaching consensus as that of the son of man. The debate concerns both the religious and historical background of the pre-Christian notion of the son of man and the question of whether Jesus used the term with reference to himself or to a third person, someone else.

Firstly, 'son of man' comes from a different tradition complex and originally had nothing to do with messianism. If the messiah is the end-time king of Israel, an earthly descendant of the Davidic dynasty, then he will destroy all Israel's enemies and so usher in Israel's time of salvation. In this messianic tradition that time is not so much 'the end' as the actualization of eternal peace in human history. The son of man, on the other hand, is a heavenly figure who will pass a wholly just sentence on the godless. This view presupposes that our history does have an end. The guarantee of inclusion in the eschatological community of the saved is not so much membership of the nation of Israel as the final verdict of the judge, whose criterion will be the individual's fidelity to the Law. Thus the idea of the son of man is embedded in a non-messianic tradition complex and only later came to be associated with messianic traditions, culminating in the 'messianic son of man'. Thus two contradictory notions (an earthly figure versus a heavenly one) were ultimately reconciled.

Although Dan. 7:13-14 does not mention a son of man (except in the Greek Septuagint version), this passage is fundamental to the prehistory of the idea. The new study by Ulrich Muller[56] at least creates some order in the chaos of interpretations. Daniel 7 has to be read in the apocalyptic perspective of a dual − that is, earthly and heavenly − history. Heavenly history forms the

[56] In what is, for a theologian, a very difficult choice amid this chaos of opinions, after some hesitation I lean towards the study by Ulrich Müller (1972). A degree of hesitation remains, on the one hand because of the very powerful arguments of H.M. Teeple, who sees in the New Testament idea of the son of man a Hellenistic-Jewish Christian contribution (possibly from Syria, whence comes also the book of Enoch). The sole use of son of man not attributed to Jesus – outside the book of Revelation – is, strikingly enough, by the Jerusalem 'Hellenist' deacon, Stephen, whose supporters fled principally to Syria (Acts 7:56); and on the other hand because of the critical arguments of Bultmann, Hahn, Tödt and Colpe, who have made a plausible case for the sole use of the term 'son of man' by Jesus himself.

background to our earthly history (see Part Two). Every nation has a 'guardian angel', a heavenly *archon,* in whom the nation is, as it were, represented and
[461] who is also its heavenly protector and 'leader'. Together these *archons* constitute the council of God (see Job 1:6ff; 2:1; 1 Kings 22:19); they stand before God's throne, ready for any service (see also Ps. 103:19ff). In Deut. 32:7-8 God sets the frontiers of the nations − and does so in correlation with the number of *elohim,* sons of God or angels. Israel, too, has its national guardian angel (in Daniel, as well as in the Qumrân literature, it is chiefly Michael; see also the Christian book of Revelation). Earthly history runs parallel with the celestial model. So if at the close of the age God delegates power to the saints of Israel, that is, the pious among his people, then in heaven, corresponding to − and anticipating – that, power over the angels of all nations is transferred to the 'angel of Israel', who in apocalyptic imagery resembles a human being (as angels are often represented) (Dan. 7:13). Thus the apocalyptic vision of the exaltation of Israel's angel in heaven explains events to come on earth, in which the fourth, most dreadful beast (the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the Maccabean period) will be destroyed and the pious of Israel will take control of the world. In Dan. 10:20-21 the angel Gabriel does battle with the *archon* of Persia and Greece; when, with Michael's help, he manages to defeat Persia, he has to take on Greece (Dan. 10:20, 21b): heavenly visions foretelling the earthly events related in Dan. 11. In a vision in 7:13-14, Daniel is permitted a glimpse of heavenly history (transfer of all remaining power to Israel's national angel) and thus gets an inkling of what is due to happen in earthly history in the end-time: the exaltation of the saints of the most high, that is, the devout of Israel, the eschatological remnant. In that sense the son of man is the heavenly symbol of (pious) Israel.

In this very plausible hypothesis we have no need to look for other mythologies, whether of ancient Iranian, Babylonian or Egyptian provenance − the 'primordial man' (F. H. Borsch) − or for myths originating on the home soil of Palestine, from ancient Ugarit (C. Colpe) (although what Müller appears to deny is undeniable, namely, that the prevailing notion of a heavenly national archon itself has older roots). The apocalyptic book, *Assumptio Moysis* (10:1), refers to God's dominion over all things and the 'filling of the hands of the chief angel'. This is clearly the prehistory of the later son of man idea.

In 1 Enoch (i.e. the Ethiopian Book of Enoch, in substance dating from about 50 B.C.) the heavenly figure 'like a man' (Daniel) has grown into the apocalyptic
[462] son of man − but in an as yet incomplete phase, in that the concepts are still inexact, tentative, and the concept 'son of man' is constantly alternating with the chosen, righteous and holy one;[57] in fact, these latter concepts are more

[57] 1 Enoch 39 to 62, while 'son of man' is restricted to three sections only: En. 64-68; 60-63; 69-71; see Maddox, *Methodenfrage,* 149; Müller, *Messias,* l.c., 38, 42.

focal than the son of man. It seems that the son of man concept was incorporated into the text at a later stage.[58] We may assume that 'God's elect' and 'the righteous one' in 1 Enoch only became son of man under the influence of Dan. 7:13-14. At first the eschatological figure in 1 Enoch is called the elect (Enoch 40:5; 45:3), 'the elect of righteousness and faithfulness' (39:6), with the emphasis on election. Here we discern a tradition complex that we have already encountered fairly often. Enoch 48:3-4 speaks of the 'light of the nations' (Is. 42:6), while Is. 42:1 has 'my chosen (one)' (see also Is. 49:1-3). From the womb God has named this chosen one, indeed, from the beginning of creation (Enoch 48:3). At this point, then, the chosen one is linked up with the deutero-Isaiahan tradition complex (Is. 42 and 49). In apocalypticism he came to be associated with the end-time: the eschatological saviour figure.

In Enoch 46 the 'son of man' makes his entrance. Just as an apocalyptic exegesis traces the chosen one to deutero-Isaiah, so a similar speculative exegesis traces the son of man to Dan. 7. Fundamental to this view is the vision in Enoch 46, to which the expression 'this son of man' constantly refers, whereas there is no mention of *this* chosen one and *this* righteous one. In other words, 'this son of man' unmistakably bears the signature of the anonymous apocalyptic author. The introduction in chapter 46 of the 'son of man' also ushers in a new name of God: a grey-beard, advanced in years ('an ancient of days') (see also Dan. 7:9) (Enoch 47:3; 48:2; 71:10). Along with the ancient one appears 'someone else whose form looks like that of a man' (Enoch 46:1). But the Enoch book seeks to identify the mysterious, Danielic heavenly figure (actually in a different sense from Daniel): a form like that of a man with a countenance charming like that of an angel. Hence the question: 'Who is this son of man, and where does he come from and why is he companion to the ancient of days' (Enoch 46:2)? The book of Enoch manifestly intends to make this clear. The answer connects Enoch's vision with Enoch 37:6-7, where we read of 'the elect of justice and of faith', and 'in the days of the chosen one shall justice and faithfulness prevail'. Hence Enoch 46:3: 'This is the son of man, who possesses justice and in whom righteousness dwells.' Thus it identifies this son of man with the 'elect of justice'; so that the son of man appears to be a later meaning of the already familiar 'chosen one'. The vision then proceeds to [463] define the function of this son of man (Enoch 46:4): he has eschatological significance in relation to kings, the mighty and the strong. Previously we heard of the judicial function of the chosen one in regard to the godless (Enoch 45:3,6). Thus Enoch 46:3, 6 combines diffuse references to the chosen one in a unitive image of the son of man who will live in his eschatological community. The son of man is a judge for the godless but a saviour for the righteous. Only

[58] H. Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* 152-153; Müller, *Messias,* 38-47; L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende gerechte?,* l.c., 70-71.

later, in the appendix (Enoch 71), does 'the son of man' become the sole title for the (eschatological) judge, for after this the title 'the chosen one' disappears in these apocalyptic circles. However, Enoch says nothing about 'dominion over every nation', since everything godless is condemned and will be destroyed. All that survives is the eschatological, holy community − prime evidence that messianism has not yet affected the concept of the son of man in Enoch. In the Enoch book the apocalypticist conjoins an existing tradition about the (deutero-Isaiahan) chosen one with the Danielic figure and identifies 'the chosen one' with it. Hence the son of man concept was only applied to the chosen, righteous one at a later stage. As a result of that identification the son of man, instead of being a heavenly figure symbolizing all Israel, is individualized in a highly specific, chosen eschatological person.

An essential factor in all this was the ancient Eastern idea of pre-existence, as extended and elaborated in apocalyptic thinking. According to the apocalyptic correlation scheme the archetypes of everything earthly pre-exist in heaven. There everything was already 'prepared' since the creation of the world (Enoch 9:6); in particular everything pertaining to eschatological salvation lay stored up in heaven; the New Jerusalem, for example, would descend to earth from heaven (Rev. 21:2; 4 Ezra 7:26; Syrian Baruch 4). The difference from the early Eastern conception is that the idea of co-existence has disappeared. The empirical Israel no longer corresponds to the heavenly Israel. Hence what will come from heaven to earth at the close of the age is the pre-existent archetype itself (see Rev. 21:10ff). The eschatological son of man is also pre-existent (Enoch 48:3ff.; 62:7); for he is certainly a key component of eschatological salvation, a hidden secret kept ready in heaven. The apocalypticist sees events to come on earth because he is afforded a glimpse into celestial history. There the visionary sees the eschatological community already prepared, with the
[464] son of man in its midst (Enoch 39:3ff). But from Enoch 48 onwards the son of man in this vision is 'dogmatized': he was created before all other creatures. Only now, in this eschatological hour (48:2), this pre-existent son of man is revealed to the saints.

At a later stage a commentator interpolated a text from an alien messianic tradition (Enoch 48:10 and 52:4); it speaks of 'the rule or lordship of his messiah (anointed one), that the latter may be strong and mighty upon earth' (5:2:4). Here the son of man is identified with the national messianic son of David. The messianic reinterpretation is even more striking in Enoch 56:5-8 and 57 (in the second part of the book of Enoch, according to the experts, the messiah in Enoch 90:37-39 is also a later interpolation): a plainly Davidic messianic tradition, indicating some contamination between the tradition of a national, Davidic messianism and that of the universal, eschatological son of man and judge of the world. Davidic messianism, apparently from the

Pharisaic *Psalmi Salomonis* (17:22-25, 26-31), is much more firmly bonded with the son of man tradition in the younger apocalypse of 4 Ezra (13:5-11, 12-13), whereas in the Enoch book it is an as yet unharmonized convergence of two originally independent traditions.

Lastly, a further development of the son of man concept (hence not in a much later stage) is to be found in Enoch 71, where Enoch himself is identified with the son of man. The Enoch 'caught up' to be with God (Enoch 70:1-4 and 71:1-4) is elevated to son of man. Whereas previously he had been the apocalyptic seer (Enoch 37-69), he is now accorded the status of son of man (Enoch 71:5-17). The problem is that this is a later addition by way of apocalyptic commentary on the existing tradition of the book of Enoch. The question is, how can this commentary accept the pre-existent son of man (as presented in the source) on the one hand, and on the other simultaneously speak of the earthly Enoch's appointment to that position? What struck the new author in the son of man was the apocalyptic figure of the judge (not his pre-existence), and the position of the end-time judge is accorded to this Enoch; consequently the idea of pre-existence had to be expunged. The story of the son of man's enthronement is reminiscent of Psalms 2:7 and 110:4 (Enoch 71:14), with which is linked the promise (Ps. 2:8; 89:29-30) of a new covenant with God, a covenant of peace (Enoch 71:15). This covenant applies to the son of man and to all his coming righteous ones (71:16), with a view to the world to come. The son of man, then, is the eschatological mediator of peace, if only for the just. This covenant of God with the son of man is the ground of pious [465] men's hopeful expectation. So Enoch 71 in fact reinterprets the Enoch tradition: Enoch himself is the eschatological judge of the wicked and the eschatological deliverer of the just. This entails dropping the idea of pre-existence.[59]

It is noteworthy that, although messianism in the strict sense is absent from the earlier apocalypses (apart from the later interpolations in the Enoch book), Davidic messianism features prominently in the son of man tradition of the later apocalypses (after A.D. 70, especially in 4 Ezra and the Syrian Baruch). The absence of messianism in early apocalypses is attributable to the Danielic figure 'on the clouds'; in other words, this figure 'like a man' is seen as a heavenly being. Daniel expects the crucial turn of temporal events to come exclusively from God (Dan. 2:34; 8:25; 11:33-35). There is no room in this vision for a mediating messiah who is moreover of earthly origin. The same applies to *Assumptio Moysis* 10. Here there is only room for a son of man, that is, a heavenly figure who is to be judge. Originally, therefore, the apocalyptic son of man stands in contrast to the Pharisaic expectation of a Davidic messiah. The former contemplates a completely new future, the latter a restoration of the

[59] Müller, *Messias,* l.c., 47-60.

idealized reign of David. A focus on the future takes the place of remembrance: total renewal instead of a restoration movement.[60] The former (apocalypticists) speak of a 'sacred remnant' of Israel (see Dan. 12:1-3); the Pharisees, on the contrary, believe in God's compassion and mercy, hence envisage the restoration and purification of the whole of Israel; to this end God sends the messiah: 'And he shall cleanse Jerusalem in holiness as at the beginning' (Ps. Sal. 17:30; see 17:21-30 and 18:5). The figure of the coming judge, therefore, varied, depending either on the radically negative assessment of past and present (among the apocalypticists) or on a more positive view of Israel's past and present despite its frailties (Pharisees). The end-time figure envisaged by the Pharisees is a redeemer and saviour. The figure of apocalyptic eschatology, on the other hand, is primarily the judge of the godless, the lapsed Israel.

Only in later (post-Christian) apocalypses is the Pharisaic expectation of a human end-time messiah-king reconciled with that of the son of man (4 Ezra; Syrian Baruch); but even there the messianic character of the son of man was never central. In apocalyptic thinking, too, the messiah figure is really a foreign element. Indeed, these later apocalypses are no longer pure apocalypticism;
[466] rabbinic orthodoxy is already evident.[61] The purpose of these books is to console and hearten after the bitter affliction of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (A.D. 70). Instead the son of man gets pushed into the background. The heavenly manifestation makes way for a human, earthly manifestation of the eschatological judge. The messiah becomes the destroyer of the nations and the saviour of Israel (4 Ezra 13:26). The messiah had an effect on the son of man tradition, which in its turn coloured the messiah concept, for instance the pre-existent messiah in 4 Ezra.[62] The task of the end-time messianic son of man was interpreted in a purely Jewish, national sense: he would gather together all the Israelites scattered abroad. To that end the peoples from every quarter of the world would go up to Jerusalem in the last days, in order to fetch back to the Holy Land the Jews at present living in their countries as a 'gift offering' so Israel might again be one (4 Ezra 13; obviously influenced by the messiah concept in the *Psalmi Salomonis* 17:26-31). The procession of the nations to Jerusalem did not imply eschatological universalism but was seen as a function of the end-time assembly of all Israel. At no stage, therefore, did Jewish messianism attain real universalism. The final liberation was not the deliverance of the world from bondage to sin but the freeing of Jews from the sinful nations around them. Late apocalypses

[60] The absence of any form of messianism in early apocalyptic is bound up with the rise of the Chasidic movement, springing from the Maccabean struggle with its principle of the 'holy war'; this last theme comes from a completely non-messianic tradition complex; see Müller, *Messias,* 61-72.

[61] Müller, *Messias,* 84-85.

[62] Ibid., 147-153.

never speak of the 'redemption of mankind'. The world was and remains created for the sake of Israel. The existential question occupying this later apocalypticism was: 'Since the world was created for our sake, why, then, is the world, our world, not under our control?' (4 Ezra 6:59). Hence redemption signified Israel's deliverance from its enemies, who deprived it of its rightful ownership. The annihilation of all Israel's enemies by the messiah was part of the eschatological condition for the final deliverance of Israel. Only when that had been accomplished (4 Ezra 13:26) could the messiah devote himself fully to his holy remnant, the eschatological community. Yet the event was also viewed more positively as the restoration of the created order, the original paradise. The kingdom of God, the new heaven and earth, would come only after this messianic reign of peace (4 Ezra 7:30-31).

These later apocalypses increasingly tended to make all intermediaries between God and man (an all but fixed mind-set throughout the East up to then) overtly Jewish and expressly subordinate to the God who would operate alone in the last days (see especially 4 Ezra 6:6b, 10b: '*ut et finis sit per Me et non per alium*'). Only God could rebuild. The contamination between the son of man tradition and the messiah tradition was already surmounted in 4 Ezra 13 [467]
by purifying the concept of the messiah and separating it from the son of man tradition. The apocalypticists, proponents of the son of man tradition, ended up ousting the heavenly son of man, opting instead for an earthly, human, messianic son of David. (Some scholars see this as anti-Christian bias, others as a purely internal Jewish controversy.) In its final stage apocalypticism reverted to the originally alien Pharisaic messiah figure of the *Psalmi Salomonis*. This later apocalyptic period has rightly been described as the start of rabbinic orthodoxy. But the reaction discernible in these apocalypses (after A.D. 70) shows that the idea of the son of man must have been more widespread at the time than the surviving literary records enable us to verify. Hence the echo in the New Testament of a general, popular expectation of the one to come could be interpreted, depending on the factional interest concerned, either in a Davidic messianic sense or in the apocalyptic perspective of the son of man. Against the background of these originally independent but subsequently converging tradition complexes, the man in the street inferred only that Israel was awaiting 'the one to come'. And the full burden of the people's expectations was laid on this figure, in a period like Jesus' when the ordinary people faced great hardship, both religious and socio-economic, and were in crisis.

(2) What has this apparently fortuitous idea of the son of man, the result of diverse historical events and circumstances, to do with Jesus of Nazareth? The fact is that in the New Testament, especially in the four gospels, Jesus of

Nazareth (called by a number of different names) speaks of himself as the son of man. R. Bultmann identified three categories, each with a distinct theme: (a) logia in which the son of man Jesus is the coming, eschatological judge; (b) logia in which Jesus is referred to as the suffering, dying but risen son of man, and (c) logia in which his entire earthly ministry is ascribed to an active subject called Jesus son of man. Exegetically the only debatable point is whether the use of the term 'son of man' is traceable exclusively to Christian church building (especially N. Perrin, H. Teeple, H. Conzelmann, Ph. Vielhauer) or whether Jesus used it himself. Of those who claim that Jesus himself spoke of the son of man, one group (mainly Bultmann, Hahn and Tödt) maintains that
[468] he spoke only of the eschatological judge − and did not identify it with himself (first theme category); another group maintains that references to the suffering son of man are 'authentically Jesus' (E. Schweizer; also, with some qualifications, M. D. Hooker); for yet others − in line more with the third theme − 'son of man' is not an eschatological title but a Hebrew (Aramaic) equivalent of 'I' (thus, with some qualification, R. Leivestad, C. Colpe, J. Jeremias). Lastly, in his new study F. Borsch attributes the thematic categories in which the son of man is mentioned to Jesus, at least in essence (a growing Anglo-Saxon trend, also evident in the recent writings of M. Hooker and I. Marshall, and those of German-oriented exegetes like R. Maddox). The question has become technically so complex that even specialists in the field have declared any further investigation pointless. The dogmatic theologian must therefore look out for himself! With no expertise in this special field he can shed no light on it. What he can do is identify the *assumptions* underlying this bewildering medley of exegetical opinions. Moreover, the past five years seem to have brought some consensus regarding the history and prehistory of the son of man concept, at least in essence. And it would seem that the differing presuppositions to some extent explain the exegetical dissent. It seems, moreover, that exegetes fail to engage in a synchronous 'close reading' of the son of man concept as concretely presented to us in the redaction of the four gospels, and are left with jumbled pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, wondering how they can be pieced together into a coherent whole. The first step, it seems to me, is to analyse the (synchronous) form of the concrete picture confronting us, the end result of a (clearly underlying) jigsaw puzzle, before looking for the antecedent bits and pieces. When piecing together a jigsaw puzzle even a child first gets the final picture firmly imprinted in his mind, then takes all the pieces apart so as to facilitate the reconstruction process. The dismantling brings its reward − for the investigator it is perhaps the most exciting stage; but the real satisfaction comes when we see the total picture.

From the foregoing it is evident that between Daniel and the New Testament, through contamination of the messiah tradition with the son of man tradition,

the term 'son of man' was given a messianic interpretation in Judaism and became a title. Hence it is difficult to accept R. Leivestad's radical conception.[63] [469] In Qumrân circles, too, where the son of man idea does not feature, the messianic expectation is supported by references not only to Psalms 2 and 110 but also to Dan. 7:13-14, suggesting that the Danielic heavenly figure has coloured the messiah concept: thus the messiah becomes Daniel's 'one sent by the most high'. Hence the messianic son of man is a pre-Christian, Judaic idea.[64]

Few commentators doubt that 'son of man' is used in the New Testament in a titular sense,[65] and furthermore is identified with Jesus Christ, that is, Jesus of Nazareth, the exalted Jesus, the son of man coming to judge the living and the dead. Yet this calls for a finer distinction, for in the synoptics references to the son of man are attributed only to Jesus (with an exception − outside the gospels − in Acts 7:56, where before his martyrdom Stephen says that he sees the son of man standing by God's throne; and Rev. 1:13 and 14:14, where it is used in a broad apocalyptic sense). Except in Acts nobody calls Jesus the son of man or speaks of him in the third person as the son of man. Nowhere in the synoptics do we find a declaration in the vein of J. Ernst, who has the New Testament saying: 'Jesus is the son of man.'[66] In other words, Jesus as the son of man is presupposed throughout Christianity, but never becomes a kerygma proclaimed by the church. The title does not feature in any christological confession; and it gradually vanishes from use among Christian congregations, just as outside the gospels the term 'kingdom of God' moves into the background and more or less disappears. After all, for Christians both 'kingdom of God' and 'son of man' assumed the concrete form of Jesus Christ: the suffering but exalted son of man. Besides, the term could not have meant much to gentile Christians. Finally, one notices that after A.D. 70, in late Judaic apocalyptic literature, too, the term 'son of man' moved into the background (see above). I wonder whether some as yet unexamined causes, rooted in a common situation, underlie this parallel development.

Although a small, radical minority among critical exegetes ascribe every use of the term 'son of man' in the New Testament to the Christian churches and none to the earthly Jesus himself,[67] some critical commentators like Bultmann, Tödt and Hahn[68] concede that in one particular usage of 'son of man' (first

[63] Leivestad, 'Apocalyptic Son?' (thesis of the whole article).
[64] Thus Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 52-53; Colpe, in ThWNT VIII, 433; P. Hoffmann, *Q-Studien,* 143-144; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 16-19; Cullmann, *Christologie,* 157-158; Müller, *Messias,* 107-156.
[65] Except, notably, R. Leivestad.
[66] J. Ernst, *Anfänge,* 49.
[67] Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 118ff; Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* 151-156; Teeple, *Son of Man,* 237-250.
[68] Bultmann, *Theologie,* 35-39, and *Tradition,* 145-146; Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 131ff and 250ff; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 23-32 and 32-42.

theme category) the term was used by the historical Jesus himself, not in reference to himself but to the eschatological figure of the coming world judge; Jesus did not identify himself with this figure. The reasons why such an
[470] identification by Jesus himself would have been psychologically improbable have been examined principally by H. M. Teeple (who denies that Jesus ever used the term) and by E. Gräszer.[69]

We must concede H. Conzelmann's point that the New Testament use of 'son of man' is usually secondary[70] and always in the context of the church's prior identification of Jesus with the son of man. One wonders, however, especially in the case of certain Anglo-Saxon scholars, whether all these son of man passages, coloured as they are by the church's identification, do not have a real-life basis in actual sayings of Jesus of Nazareth, and that the most probable common denominator in the three theme categories is the relation to God's eschatological grace, lordship and judgment. Jesus, in and through his public ministry, was evidently conscious of that relation: it is the core of his self-understanding, as unveiled in his message and his conduct both towards God (the Law or disclosed will of God) and towards people. Thus Jesus himself provides the basis for the possible interpretation that the judgment passed by the son of man − the one coming in the last days − was already accomplished in Jesus' prophetic ministry, as well as in his suffering and death.

Against that background Anglo-Saxon exegetes are fairly sceptical of certain German colleagues, who acknowledge a possible authentic link with Jesus only in the case of the first of the aforementioned three theme categories: the son of man as eschatological world judge.[71] They claim that a contrary movement can be detected in the gospels, which tend not to intensify the title 'son of man', but rather to limit and reinterpret it. Although the son of man is frequently

[69] Teeple, *Son of man,* 220-222; E. Gräszer, *Naherwartung,* 122-124.

[70] According to Conzelmann three groups remain (see Bultmann, *Theologie,* 31-33) that could be considered authentic sayings of Jesus: (a) the son of man must suffer many things (typical Markan tradition: Mk. 8:31; 9:31; 10:33f; 14:21; cf. 14:41); he calls this group (along with the redactional Mk. 9:9, 12) a Christian post-Easter reflection, not 'authentic Jesus-material'; (b) centred on the activities of Jesus in his earthly life: seeking what is lost; as opposed to animals, the son of man has no stone on which to lay his head, etc. (in Mark, in Q and in Luke: Mk. 2:28; 8:20 par. Lk. 9:58; Lk. 7:33-34 par. Mt. 11:18-19; Lk. 11:30 Q, Mt. 12:40; Mk.10:45 par. Mt. 20:28; Mt. 12:32 par. Lk. 12:10; Lk. 19:10); the possibly 'authentic' instances among these are (according to Conzelmann): Mt. 11:18-19 par. Lk. 7:33-34; also Lk. 11:30 Q; general verdict is: post-Easter communal reflection; (c) finally: the coming son of man (in Mark – in Q – and in the source peculiar to Mark; and always in the third person: Mk. 13:26 par. Mk. 14:62; 10:23; Mt. 16:27; Lk. 17:22ff; Lk. 17:22; and lastly the central passage: Mk. 8:38, and in Q: Lk. 12:8-9=Mt. 10:32-33): all these (according to Conzelmann) assume situations relating to the Christian church; also in the last Q passage, where the distinction between 'Jesus' and 'son of man' is not given, but points to two periods of activity by one and the same person: this logion also already identifies Jesus with the son of man, as the context of the 'ecclesial *homology*' (Lk. 12:8) in fact confirms (thus Conzelmann, *Grundriss,* 152-155; see also in RGG^3, III, 630-632).

[71] Maddox, *Methodenfrage,* 154.

mentioned, none of the four gospels seeks to advance an explicit 'son of man Christology'; quite the reverse: a persistent tradition, apparently going back to Jesus and not amenable to a distinctive christological project, obliges the evangelists not to suppress the term 'son of man'. The fact that during his life on earth Jesus appears to have spoken quite explicitly of the son of man, in the context of his own task and destiny, appears to be too deeply entrenched in the Jesus tradition to permit its arbitrary erasure. Jesus himself expected a coming son of man as judge. The 'cross-section' criterion is as cogent here as anywhere else. In Anglophone exegetical literature, then, there is a clear trend towards [471] attributing the three theme categories featuring a son of man entirely to church redaction and at the same time regarding them as basically authentic Jesus material,[72] yet with a common connotation: the son of man is the eschatological judge and lord of the world sent by God.

There is another tradition we need to consider: that of the suffering righteous one and/or suffering prophet. Because the son of man was a vague, elusive idea to begin with, it was particularly prone to contamination with all sorts of other tradition complexes. In pre-Christian times the tradition of the suffering righteous one, with its ultimate prospect of exaltation, was probably not yet associated with that of the son of man; but Jesus' history caused the two traditions to merge. If Jesus did speak of the son of man − and from a critical viewpoint the probability is hard to deny – it raises the question of what his listeners must have understood by it, either from Jesus' own explanation (but this is not recorded anywhere) or from its presupposed, established meaning; and that was definitely the (messianic) apocalyptic saviour figure or judge of the world sent by God − with the rider, taken from another tradition: via exaltation after suffering. By Jesus' time, because of the contamination of originally independent traditions, even this shade of meaning was no longer foreign to the at bottom equally 'heavenly' notion of son of man.[73]

Confirmation of Jesus' own use of the term 'the son of man' is a logion about John the Baptist, who as herald of God's approaching wrath − according to Mk. 1:7; Mt. 3:11; Lk. 3:16; Acts 13:25 − speaks of 'the one to come' (with, perhaps, a Christian overlay: 'the mightier one to come'), who will come to judge with fire: clearly an image of the eschatological world judge, the son of man. Likewise, in Dan. 7 we find the context of the 'judgment' and the 'stream

[72] M. Hooker, *Son of man,* 7; F. Borsch, *The son of man,* 314; I. Marshall, *Son of man debate,* 66-87; Maddox, *Methodenfrage,* 155.

[73] L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende gerechte?* l.c., 64-71. Again, the passage in Daniel which speaks of somebody 'like a man' – Israel's heavenly *archon* (see Müller, *Messias,* l.c., 19-30) – is set in the context of a presently suffering Israel very soon to be exalted. In other words: from the very outset the concept 'son of man' is located partly in the context of the theme of the exaltation of the suffering righteous one; see G. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, immortality and eternal life in intertestamental Judaism,* (Harvard, Cambridge 1972), 76-78.

of fire' as the means employed to 'judge' the fourth beast (Dan. 7:11). Here the son of man is a being sent by heaven, about whom (in contrast to God) Judaism does speak anthropomorphically ('I am not worthy to untie the shoestrings of this coming one'). The 'mightier one' whom John expects is the apocalyptic son of man (whom the Baptist's followers identified with the coming Elijah) − identified with Jesus not by John but by the Christian churches, thus making the Baptist the forerunner of Jesus (in Christianity).[74]

[472] There is nothing to be said against − and a great deal in favour of − making a historical connection between John's preaching of repentance in the face of the coming judgment and his references to 'the one to come', the apocalyptic son of man already familiar to Judaism, and not calling it a post-Easter church creation. As a former recipient of John's baptism Jesus was familiar with this preaching of the coming son of man; he himself extended it in line with his own message. Like John, Jesus was expecting the son of man to come soon.[75] 'You will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the son of man comes' (Mt. 10:23); and Jesus clearly saw his own activity in relation to this coming son of man (Mk. 8:38; Lk. 12:8).

Yet the identification of Jesus with the son of man presupposes the Easter experience. And only that experience made possible the christological project in which Jesus of Nazareth − his ministry, suffering, death, resurrection/ exaltation and coming parousia − came to be synthesized in 'the son of man' − although this threefold identification does not seem to have occurred all at once, nor in the same way in all the early local churches.

§2 The Christian 'first option' among existing Jewish models of end-time saviour figures

A. EARLY CHRISTIANITY: A JEWISH INTERPRETATION OF JESUS

We are not suggesting that contemporary Judaism offered Jesus' disciples a prototype, as it were, of what they had encountered in and with Jesus − as though Jesus of Nazareth were just the historical embodiment of a full-fledged concept already existing in the history of post-exilic Jewry. For it soon appeared that all the existing models crumbled when applied to Jesus.

On the other hand, identifying a person does not happen instantly. It entails maturation, expectations and surmise, prior tentative identifications and subsequent corrections, recognition, sharpening of contours, until Jesus finally

[74] J. Becker, *Joh. der Täufer,* l.c., 27-38.

[75] E. Gräszer, *Naherwartung,* l.c., 92, and his more ample study: *Das Problem der Parusieverzögerung in den synoptische Evangelien und in der Apostelgeschichte* (BZNW, 22) (Berlin (1957), 1960²) (cf. Cullmann's critique of this: 'Parusieverzögerung und Urchristentum', in *Vorträge und Aufsätze 1925-1962* [ed. K. Fröhlich], Tübingen-Zürich 1966, 427-444).

'appears' in his true form. The exposition that follows is meant to show that the 'eschatological prophet' was an essential stage in the burgeoning early Christian recognition of Jesus of Nazareth's true identity − a stage that produced a primary identification of the person which enables us to understand the oldest, pre-canonical credal models. [473]

Apart from the cleansing of the temple and the account (adapted by the church) of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus' public ministry in no way tallied with the activity expected of a royal, Davidic messiah. Hence there was no ground whatever (apart from the resurrection) for invoking the Davidic saviour figure to identify Jesus. Only when the interpretive experience of Jesus as the risen one was complete could Psalms 2 and 110 and 2 Sam. 7, already given a Judaic messianic interpretation, be adduced to portray the resurrection as an exaltation and investment with power, thus interpreting Jesus eschatologically as a Davidic messiah. But this was a secondary reflection, made possible by a process of thinking in which Jesus' person had already been identified in the first place. For that first personal identification the son of man was not considered as such, because the term suggested a being coming down out of heaven, and that was difficult to identify with an earthly Jesus whose parents were known. Apart from the eschatological prophet, who took on some features of the *ebed Yahweh* or servant of God[76] (which as a 'collective Israel' was not immediately considered), no other models of the medium of eschatological salvation were available to Jesus' disciples.

Without wishing to deny the influence of the other two traditions of eschatological saviour figures, therefore, our analysis leads us to conclude that the primary source of all four credal models is the fundamental interpretation of Jesus' life according to the model of the messianic − that is, *Spirit-filled* − religious end-time prophet. Because of their experiences with Jesus during his time on earth, the choice of his first followers – the later Christians − fell upon the familiar Jewish model of the eschatological prophet. In that model they recognized a true reflection of the Jesus they had known in their day-to-day life together. To put it baldly: if the model had not already existed, the impression that Jesus had made on them throughout his ministry would have obliged them to invent it.

This implies that originally there was no distinction between Jewish and Christian messianism, but rather a deliberate choice (arising from the extraordinary impact and nature of Jesus' actual earthly ministry) between two existing Jewish models. That choice fell on the messianism of the end-time prophet, the anointed final prophet of the good news from God − although

[76] See the articles by J. Coppens, 'Le messianisme israelite. La relève prophétique', l.c., and 'La mission du serviteur de Yahwé', l.c.; also J. Coppens, 'Nieuw licht over de Ebed-Jahweh-liederen' (Analecta Lovaniensia Biblica et Orientalia, Ser. 2, fasc. 15), Louvain-Paris 1950, 3-16.

[474] partly because of existing contamination by Davidic and prophetic messianism and especially in light of the resurrection, the Davidic messianic tradition also played an unmistakable role in some early Christian communities and thus in the gospels. Yet even here the Davidic messiah was transformed by the fundamental decision to opt for the messianic prophet, the one filled with God's Spirit, who brings the joyful news of God's approaching grace. The very first Christians, who supplied the initial thrust in the early Christian traditions and thus fundamentally determined the direction they would take, were not Greeks but Aramaic- and Greek-speaking Jews; we should not forget that. The Christian notion of the messiah incorporates a Jewish and Christian reaction against one particular Jewish conception of the messiah, expressed primarily in the Zealotic messianism of Israel's resistance fighters. Certain Jews and all Christians vetoed an interpretation of the 'reign of God' which was manifestly not consonant with Yahwism and with Israel's ancient idea of God's lordship. In this respect the first Christians felt themselves to be simply Jews who went to the temple like all pious Jews.

The identification of Jesus with the messianic end-time prophet had major implications. For in the Judaism of the time this concept evoked a whole range of meanings: christ, the anointed, but also *Maran* or Lord (*Kyrios*), Wisdom and medium of God's revelation, son of God, teacher of the Law, et cetera. Not only was this christological model – by that I mean the entire semantic field surrounding 'christ', the anointed prophet – already established in the Judaism of the time; it was also personalized: Enoch, Moses, Elijah, Samuel were already being interpreted 'christologically' in Judaism, and in 4 Ezra (though written after Jesus Christ) Ezra, too, is given a 'christological' interpretation; besides, the Aramaic Enoch (substantially written half a century before Jesus) presents a similar 'christology' of Enoch. In Judaism they were all known as *christus, kyrios,* son of God. Fodder enough for historians of religion − but crucially different from Jesus! For the first Christians what was a literary process of tradition history − all this apocalyptic literature is essentially pseudonymous; all these models applied exclusively to figures from the distant past − became a means of articulating their assessment of a newly deceased, historical person on his own merit and significance: all this was said of Jesus of Nazareth at a time when many of his friends and companions were still alive. It had nothing to do with the tenor of Jewish apocalyptic literature; it
[475] broke through all existing frameworks and, in comparison with parallel literature at the time, was completely un-Jewish and non-apocalyptic. There is no need to think in terms of literary dependence, but simply of shared participation in the spirit and mind-set of the age. On the basis of a common 'charismatic exegesis' of texts from sacred books it provided the hermeneutic horizon in which Christians were able to interpret Jesus of Nazareth 'according

to the Scriptures'. The use of what came to be known to Christians as the 'Old Testament' was fundamental to their interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth − but subject to the weight, criterion and norm of Jesus' historical ministry. What reliable evidence do we have?

B. JESUS, PRESUMED TO BE THE END-TIME PROPHET

The New Testament clearly shows that in his lifetime Jesus of Nazareth impressed many people as being 'a prophet' − by then a rarity, just as John the Baptist was exceptional. According to the people Jesus was 'one of the prophets' − a Semitism for: he is a prophet (Mk. 6:15; 8:27-28). This Markan tradition is confirmed (criterion of cross-section) by the peculiarly Lukan tradition (Lk. 7:39) and by the additions (if compared with Mark) in Mt. 21:11,46; see also Lk. 9:7-9; Jn. 6:14-15 and 1:21. Likewise, in Lk. 24:15 the travellers to Emmaus indicate that they had acknowledged Jesus as a prophet in his lifetime. That the people, and more especially his own disciples, judged Jesus to be a prophet was certainly a pre-Easter fact.

Yet another circumstance appears to be a recollection of Jesus' life on earth. The question of the connection between Jesus and the Spirit of God – the hallmark of a prophet − was one of the first problems posed by Jesus' public ministry. From the outset it was clear that there was something extraordinary about Jesus. People said of him: 'He is beside himself' (Mk. 3:21). This gave rise to a diversity of opinion: either he was possessed by the devil (Mk. 3:22; Mt. 12:24; Lk. 11:15; Jn. 7:20; 8:48; 9:16) or by God's Spirit − a prophet (Lk. 7:18-23 parallels; 11:14-23 parallels; see also: Jn. 8:48-50,52 and 10:20-21). For those who trusted him, he was filled with the Spirit (Lk. 11:14-23=Mt. 12:22-30 from the Q source; also Mt. 11:13-20; cf. Jn. 6:14; 8:48-50,52 and 10:20-21). Judging by these independent literary traditions, the question of the spirit of the devil or the spirit of God − in other words, did Jesus have the prophetic spirit? − seems [476] quite definitely to reflect a memory of Jesus' days on earth.[77]

There are also passages which, though already revised by the church, nonetheless point to a pre-Easter expectation that Jesus was the eschatological prophet: a *propheta redivivus,* either Elijah or the dead but risen John the Baptist, or even (Matthew adds) Jeremiah (Lk. 9:8 as against Mk. 6:15; Lk. 9:19 as against Mk. 8:28; Mt. 16:14; Jn. 6:14-15). In other words, for Luke the Markan 'a prophet' becomes 'one of the prophets of old' (Lk. 9:19), an expression for the eschatological prophet, in other words, a great prophet (Lk. 7:16). Luke has the travellers to Emmaus acknowledge Jesus not simply as a prophet but as the

[77] See A. Polag, *Zu den Stufen der Christologie in Q* (Studia Evang., IV-1), Berlin 1968, 72-74, who sees pre-Easter material there. According to Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 203-212, they come to the fore only in the second Q phase, but influenced by the independent (actually older) Markan tradition (Mk. 3:22).

eschatological prophet, the one who would redeem Israel (also Mt. 16:14 as compared with Mk. 8:28). Particularly striking is Lk. 4:16-21, where Jesus' public ministry starts with a sermon in the synagogue expounding Is. 61:1-2 (interpreted at that time as the great annunciation of the eschatological christ prophet) as a prophecy about to be fulfilled. According to Luke Jesus presents himself as the end-time prophet ushering in the time of God's grace, plainly a post-Easter reflection. Mark, too, mentions that Jesus was thought to be the eschatological prophet: was he the revivified John the Baptist or Elijah (Mk. 6:14-15; 8:28)? It is difficult to argue that this was simply a post-Easter evaluation, as in the same early Christian tradition John the Baptist himself is already interpreted as Elijah *redivivus* (Mk. 9:13). In 7:25-27 Luke, too, who elsewhere depicts Jesus as the last prophet, identifies John the Baptist with the Elijah prophet of the last days; it refers to a post-Easter controversy between John's disciples and Jesus', the latter declaring Jesus greater than John, hence 'more than a prophet' (Lk. 7:26b). In terms of tradition history, therefore, Mk. 6:14 and 8:28 contain authentic reminiscences of a notion about Jesus (or at any rate a question) that had taken shape even before Easter: at least a hope that Jesus was the eschatological prophet (without as yet implying a 'Christology', unless − see below − applying the idea of the eschatological prophet to Jesus in itself constituted a christological identification). Jn. 6:14 is relevant, perhaps, to a 'messianic' interpretation of Jesus as eschatological prophet: 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!' (except for the Johannine 'into the world' this verse seems to refer to historical memories). Jesus saw ideas about
[477] a Davidic messiah behind that popular reaction (Jn. 6:15); and 'he withdrew'.

In Mk. 6:4 and parallels, and in Lk. 13:53 Jesus himself compares his destiny with that of a prophet (in line with the Q tradition: Lk. 11:49-52); the implicit suggestion is that Jesus envisaged his life in prophetic categories, in this case insofar as it included rejection and martyrdom. Bultmann himself concedes the historical character of Jesus' prophetic self-understanding (mainly on the basis of Lk. 12:49; Mk. 2:17; Mt. 15:24),[78] especially in his prophetic, even more than prophetic siding with the humble, the lowly and the socially and religiously marginalized. This, too, on the basis of Is. 11:4,6; Is. 42:1-4 and 61:1-2, is an unmistakable feature of the great last prophet. O. Cullmann,[79] while conceding that Jesus never identified himself with the eschatological prophet, maintains that he interpreted his mission and conduct in terms of end-time prophecy. Our analysis will show that post-Easter theology about the historical fact of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan (Mk. 1:10-11; Mt. 3:16-17; Lk. 3:21-22 and Jn. 1:32) pertains to recognition of Jesus as the eschatological prophet, in whom (because of contamination by various originally independent Old Testament

[78] R. Bultmann, *Theologie,* 35-39.
[79] O. Cullmann, *Christologie,* 37; also R. Fuller, *Foundations,* l.c., 46-49.

traditions) royal and priestly messianism merged; Jesus is 'the one filled with God's Spirit', the fulfilment of all the great promises of the Old Testament: Is. 11:2 as well as 42:1-2; Is. 61:1 (see Acts 10 and Lk. 4) and Ps. 2:7. That is how the synoptic and Johannine interpretations of Jesus' baptism see it. In Acts 3:11-26 and 7:37 Jesus expressly fulfils the expectation concerning an end-time 'prophet like Moses' (Deut. 18:15). (That was how Christian prophets explained Jesus' life in light of Old Testament texts.) 2 Peter 1:16-21 alludes to this (by then Christian) practice of Jewish charismatic prophetic interpretation of the Old Testament (which also accords with inter-testamental exegesis). Thus Paul said that Jesus is 'the anointed one in whom God's promises have become yes and amen' (2 Cor. 1:21-22): the end-time prophet, filled with God's Spirit, foreshadowed in Is. 61, was concretely manifested in Jesus of Nazareth. One could say that, according to this early Christian interpretation, at Jesus' baptism in the Jordan in the very presence of the 'old testament' (concluded by John the Baptist) his office as messianic eschatological prophet was officially and solemnly proclaimed. The Q community preserved logia in which Jesus sees his mission in the line of succession to the prophets (Mt. 23:29-30 and 23:34-36,37 parallels), often in relation to the eschatological judgment. Quite certainly, therefore, for the Q community the earthly Jesus was the eschatological prophet, but minus any Davidic dynastic messianism; the title [478] 'Christ' does not feature in the Q tradition; and in view of the three temptation stories about Jesus (see above) this cannot be accidental. It implies repudiation of dynastic Davidic messianism involving a ruler figure.

Luke and Matthew trace 'being filled with the Spirit' to Jesus' birth (infancy gospels), for one is a prophet 'from his mother's womb' (Jer. 1:5; Is. 49:1-3; Ps. 110); Paul is in the same tradition when he says about his own election as an apostle that his calling was from his mother's womb, despite his late conversion at Damascus (Gal. 1:15; this idea is part of the same tradition complex.) Because the prophet in this tradition is 'God with us', Matthew, too, starts his gospel by identifying Jesus with the prophetic concept of God 'being with us' (Mt. 1:23). Various independent traditions in the early church simply call Jesus 'the prophet', with an almost explicit allusion to the eschatological prophet.

Remarkably, the Johannine gospel is constructed on the prophetic Moses model: Jesus is the new Moses, the eschatological 'prophet like Moses', an even greater prophet than Moses (Jn. 1:17). John 1:16-18 is formulated with an eye to the account of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 33-34): Moses has to lead the people to the promised land (Ex. 33:1-12; 34:34), to which end he asks for God's abiding presence (33:15, 16; 34:9 and 40:34): Jn. 1:14 (*eskènôsen*); then Moses asks: 'Show me thy glory (Ex. 33:18): Jn. 1:14b ('We have beheld his glory'); then comes: 'No one sees God but he dies' (Ex. 33:20): Jn. 1:18 ('No one has ever seen God'). Yet

Yahweh reveals his name to Moses: 'Yahweh ... full of grace and truth' (Ex. 34:6): Jn. 1:17 ('For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ'); God then undertakes to go with his people (Ex. 34:9-10) and gives Moses the tablets of stone containing the Law (34:28): Jn. 1:17 ('The law was given through Moses ...'). This parallel with Moses is sustained throughout the Johannine gospel: Moses' calling (Ex. 3) and Jesus' calling after the baptism in the Jordan (Jn. 1:29-34; see 8:32-36); then come facts about Moses' marvellous power, through which the Nile waters turn red with blood: Jesus' miracle at Cana (Jn. 2:1-11). Moses celebrates the first passover feast (Ex. 11-12): Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the passover and – already on that occasion, according to John − carries out the cleansing of the temple (Jn. 2:13-16); next Moses with his people passes through the Red Sea (Ex. 14): in Jn. 3:1-5 Jesus speaks with Nicodemus about the need 'to be born of water and spirit'. When
[479] the people ran out of bread and water and were also plagued with poisonous snakes, Moses made a bronze serpent, raised it and set it up on a pole, and everybody bitten by a snake who gazed up at the bronze image stayed alive (Num. 21:4-9): 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up' (Jn. 3:14). After crossing the Red Sea, Moses and God's people discover a spring of water (Ex. 15:22-25): in Jn. 4 Jesus is heard conversing with a Samaritan woman about the 'spring of living water'. In Ex. 16 the miraculous manna is mentioned: Jn. 6 records the feeding of the five thousand (cf. Ex. 17:1-7) as well as Jesus' discourse on the manna from heaven. John 10 and 11 contain various allusions to Moses' successor, Joshua, who actually led God's people into the promised land. Structurally the Johannine gospel is built on the vision of Jesus as the eschatological Moses prophet, who leads the people into the kingdom of God. One might, of course, infer that in a late sapiential context (third credal model) John is presenting a theology of Jesus as the eschatological Moses prophet, who himself leads the people into the promised land: 'in the bosom of the Father' (Jn. 1:18), the kingdom of God.

All the gospels preserve the memory of the first identification of Jesus' person, suggested by his own life: Jesus is the prophet of the approaching − and in and through his public ministry already manifested − final kingdom of God. Hence it strikes me as incorrect that the title 'Jesus as prophet', often placed last in many exegetical surveys of Jesus' titles,[80] is usually assigned a minor position and is regarded as inadequate.[81] One may well ask whether this is not disregard of Jesus' prophetic self-understanding, particularly since he is

[80] Thus still in the recent little work by J. Ernst, *Anfänge der Christologie* (Stuttgart 1972), 53-54.

[81] Cullmann, *Christologie,* 46. J. Blank, *Jesus von Nazareth,* devotes only a few lines (understandably, given the design of his collection of individual articles) to Jesus as the eschatological prophet (79-80), but says nonetheless: 'Jesus carried out the function of the eschatological prophet' (80); H.W. Bartsch, *Jesus, Prophet und Messias aus Galiläa* (Frankfurt 1970), looks only for the precise reasons for Jesus' arrest and execution.

dismissive of dynastic Davidic messianism and speaks about the son of man as the coming judge of the world; in other words, whether one is not simply emptying Jesus' self-understanding of all content or even filling it up with later christological insights. That is to overlook the matrix of all other honorific titles and credal strands.

The fact that the link between the earthly Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ is recognition, common to all credal strands, of the earthly Jesus as the eschatological prophet (who does indeed surpass all expectations), and that this identification (at least as a question and a supposition) was most likely pre-paschal has enormous consequences. It points to substantial continuity between the impression that Jesus made during his earthly days and the church's apparently 'high christological' kerygmata or creeds after his death, because tradition history shows that all these kerygmata in the Judaism of the [480] time were already implicit in the title 'eschatological prophet'. In other words: whoever acknowledges Jesus as the eschatological prophet of the nearby kingdom of God taps a store of words in tradition history, in which titles such as Christ, Lord, Son of God immediately come to the fore, almost as synonyms or at least as associations. This needs to be defined more precisely.

C. JESUS, THE END-TIME MESSENGER FROM GOD, SOURCE OF THE EARLIEST CREDAL STRANDS AND MAIN SOURCE OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN USE OF THE TITLES CHRIST, THE LORD, THE SON

(a) A premise often posited but even more frequently challenged[82] is that *testimonia* were already circulating in Jesus' day, that is, anthologies of (Old Testament) Scripture, which, on the pattern of the eschatological exegesis common at the time, collated proof texts from Scripture in which contemporary interpreters of Jewish apocalyptic literature saw 'prophecies' concerning events of the last days and certain saviour figures who were supposed to play a specific part in them. This *pesher* hermeneutics (midrashic exegesis) of the Scriptures, collated in summaries, has long been recognized as dating from the second, third and fourth centuries; and specialist scholars also conceded that they were simply a codified version of older, even very ancient traditions − like the rabbinic writings of the second century after Christ. But finds in the Qumrân caves have showed that such eschatological exegetical *testimonia* are in fact of a much older date;[83] scrolls (albeit poorly preserved)

[82] J.P. Audet, 'L'hypothese des Testimonia', in RB 70 (1963), 381-405.

[83] G.R. Driver, *The Judean Scrolls* (Oxford 1965); J. Fitzmyer, 'The use of explicit Old Testament quotations in Qumrân literature and the New Testament', in NTS 7 (1960-1), 297-333, and '4QTest and the New Testament', in ThSt 18 (1967), 513-522; J. de Waard, *A comparative study of the Old Testament text in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Leyden 1965); especially R. Le Déaut,

have even been found, written in Aramaic more or less as it must have been spoken in Jesus' time. Particularly in Qumrân (and that means at the latest prior to 70 and 72/73, when at the time of the fall of Jerusalem the Qumrân community was exterminated after having secured the safety of its library) they made intensive use of such 'anthologies' for their theology (if a lot of them were not actually the work of the Qumrân community itself). They would seem, as appears from similar references to the Old Testament in the New Testament and the proof texts (identical, though differently interpreted) alluding to events in the last days, to have been known and used by a wider circle. But quite apart from whether New Testament writers knew and drew on
[481] such 'anthologies', they point to general use in that period for the purpose of interpreting contemporary events (more or less universally held to signify the end-time) in light of Scripture.[84] The New Testament procedure of citing Scripture as evidence in interpreting the Jesus event is not simply 'anti-Jewish polemics', nor a specifically Christian kind of exegesis, but a practice current in Judaism at the time.

The basic premise of this exegesis, as encountered in the *testimonia,* was that Scripture had a hidden, eschatological meaning. Charismatic exegesis could unveil that meaning, thereby giving people a picture of the end of the age and so shedding light on current events. Such exegesis entailed combining scriptural passages from different traditions, often by way of Hebrew texts already 'updated' via the Greek version, the Septuagint, and on the strength of similar sounding words, so that by switching certain letters around, if need be, one obtained quite different combinations from those intended by the original text. The *sensus scripturisticus* thus acquired (Paul's letters are a clear, albeit traditional Jewish example) could then be applied to contemporary events in which that biblical meaning was seen as being fulfilled.[85] It was a common method of exegesis in those days, applied in a fairly rigorous way by Pharisaic rabbis and much more freely in Qumrân and among other apocalyptic groups in Palestine; it was the method used for the Septuagint, by Philo in particular,

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'La présentation targumique du sacrifice d'Isaac et la soteriologie paulinienne' (Analecta Biblica, 17-18), Rome 1963, vol. 2, 563-574; 'Les études targumiques', in ETL 44 (1968), 5-34; *Introduction à la literature argumique* (Rome 1966), and 'Tradition juive ancienne et exégèse chrétienne', in RHPR 51 (1971), 31-51. See i.c.: G. Vermès, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth 1962).

[84] Expectation of the world's end was a fitful but powerful phenomenon at that time (rather like the end of the world by means of hydrogen bombs and pollution of the environment in our time). Certain major events contributed to that: the tyranny of Nero; the struggle centered around Galba, Otto, Vitellius and Vespasian; rebellion in Gaul (a. 68), in Germania (a. 69), in Judea (a. 66-70); earthquakes in Laodicea (a. 60), in Pompeii (a. 63); the eruption of Vesuvius (a. 79), etc. Also previously: ever since the Maccabean period (with the first flowering of apocalyptic) expectation of the end of the world had been growing, as with the Essenes – 1QpHab 2:5 and 9:6 and CD 4:4 and 6:11 – and with the Pharisees (Ps. Sal.; Josephus, *Antiquitates,* 17:43 ff). For Jews the divinizing emperor cult in particular was intolerable, the beginning of 'the end'.

[85] See M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten,* 240-242; J. Giblet, *Messie prophète,* 122.

and for the later targums as we know them, which are only perpetuating a longer tradition. (From this source patristics and the further development of Christian exegesis drew what is known as the *sensus plenior* of Scripture, at the same time applying the procedure to the writings of the New Testament.)

This is the background to the Jewish 'christ tradition' of the coming eschatological prophet whom, on the basis of this tradition, the first Christians identified with Jesus of Nazareth. Proceeding not from the existing model but from what had been manifested to them historically in Jesus, they seized on that model as the best reflection or reproduction of the impression Jesus had made on them. The model fully and accurately represented the concrete person of Jesus: he was that christ.

In the anthologies found at Qumrân − 4Qtest and 4Qflor (that is to say, the *testimonia* and *florilegia* found in the fourth cave at Qumrân, or anthologies of scriptural texts thus compiled and eschatologically interpreted) − we have an inventory of end-time saviour figures. On the one hand there is the [482] eschatological 'prophet like Moses', with reference to Deut. 18:15-19 (not Deut. 18 as expounded in modern exegesis, which sees in it the institutionalizing of prophetism in Israel, but as a prophecy about an end-time prophet); this Qumrân exegesis involves combining and reading together Deut. 18:15-19; 5:28-29; 33:8-11 and Num. 24:15-17. Besides that, again through combining different scriptural passages, there emerges a messianic oracle concerning two messiahs: a Davidic messiah and a high-priestly messiah who interprets God's law (partly apropos the controversy that had raged since the Hasmonean reign as to whether in Israel the two functions might not be united in a single person).[86] For the notion of 'two messiahs' (besides the aforementioned eschatological prophet) the most crucial passage was Zech. 4:3,11-14. According to the Qumrânic view these two, the royal and the priestly messiahs, are the messiah of Israel and the messiah of Aaron, but in the *Testamentum Levi*, the messiah from Judah and the messiah from Levi. Moses and Aaron, Israel's great leaders, supply the model for this; but the fact that in different traditions they are readily interchanged with other saviour figures from the past − especially Elijah and Enoch − points to a process of literary development. In circles envisaging only one eschatological saviour figure it is normally Elijah, in other words, the end-time prophet (under the weight of Scripture itself: Mal. 3:1 with 3:23-24). Of all this hair-splitting exegesis in the end only the last − the eschatological Elijah figure − got through to the populace (even Malachi may well attest and echo a burgeoning popular expectation).

At any rate, the developments in the period of Jewish apocalypticism give us

[86] Vermes. l.c.. 244, Fitzmyer, in ThSt 513ff.

an idea of how Israel's sacred books were used to interpret current events and ones still to come. This Jewish exegesis was used by the first Christians as well. (How could those Jewish Christians have done otherwise?)

Paul is a clear example of such 'charismatic exegesis' in many − for us the most difficult − passages in his letters; it is less striking but no less real and (rather deceptively) widespread in Acts and the gospels. Once one understands the process it follows that the Old Testament is not the *source* of the interpretation of current events, but that the prevailing view of such events (arising from their very impact), which is not easy to verbalize, is precisely articulated and formulated with the aid of conceptual material from the sacred books. In terms of traditional Jewish thought, moreover, a peculiar
[483] interpretation (e.g. this Jesus is the christ) is validated only if it can be exegetically demonstrated that the promised christ figure (of the Old Testament) is fulfilled in Jesus. In other words, this Jewish hermeneutics interprets contemporary events in light of the Bible, which provides the expressive imagery and vocabulary necessary to communicate an 'interpretation of reality' (understanding of a present or coming event), that is, to formulate it in concepts readily intelligible to adherents of this tradition (even though by that time it was often just a literary tradition, yet in those pious circles still vividly real). To us, many centuries later, such a process is foreign because, given the history of Western philosophy, our interpretation differs greatly from what Jewish biblical hermeneutics of Jesus of Nazareth actually intended or could have intended. The process itself, however, we can certainly empathize with in a social and psychological context. Hence it is no cause for concern (even granting possible literary dependence) that this hermeneutics became the foundation of the whole of Christian Christology, while the same key concepts were applied just as ingenuously to, for example, Moses, Elijah and especially the 'son of man Enoch'. (A case in point is the Christian trinitarian doctrine of God, the result or implication of Christians' refusal to identify Jesus absolutely, without qualification, with the living God.) The existing models are no cause for anxiety. On the contrary, Moses, Elijah, Enoch or the 'coming son of man Ezra' were envisaged in the literature as *literary* figures, pseudonyms admittedly – for real persons from a misty past, but concrete fictions to express the contemporary worldview. They were 'literary categories', confined to the elite of religious intellectuals. All that got through to the man in the street was that there was 'a coming one'; and given his historical and social situation, he had every reason to hope for a liberator and deliverer! That became his spontaneous personal expectation, to which 'the people' referred to in the New Testament still clearly attest.

In the early Christian tradition and its credal models, on the other hand, these familiar literary motifs are used to express in an intelligible way a

contemporary human phenomenon: that of a man who had just recently died. Anyone could still make their own critical inquiries if they wished. Such identification, however, is completely unknown in the entire body of Jewish, [484] non-Christian literature. It was literature, not a movement. Divinizing Moses, Enoch or Ezra − figures from the remote past − was recognized by all and sundry as a literary procedure, even an edifying anthropological model, and that is what everyone understood it to be. The anointed 'Enoch christ' did not give rise to an Enoch movement any more than a 'christ Ezra' triggered an Ezra movement, even though the same messianic name was assigned to both. In other words, a literary model of itself does not engender a movement. But Jesus did trigger a Christ movement. That is a fundamental difference. And so to this Jesus, in whom many found real-life, historical salvation, familiar literary models could be applied without misgiving (in order to be understandable to people of that time) − provided Jesus had indeed made himself known through his message, words and deeds to be the real 'prophet of the end-time'. For claimants to a messianic role, leaders of resistance movements against Rome were widely prevalent during the period before and after Jesus. Form-critical analysis of the New Testament forces us to admit that the impression Jesus made on his environment (although the implications were not fully appreciated at first) was not that of a 'messianic' resistance fighter but of a messenger and prophet of a deeper liberation (in which the very idea of 'occupation' became pointless). This was how he was experienced even before Easter, at least as a question and a vaguely formulated expectation. After his death, when his life could be viewed as a whole, people started drawing conclusions from the manifestation of this end-time prophet. That is a christological interpretation of Jesus, implicit even in the pre-Easter surmise that the prophet of God's 'final day' had appeared. It invites us, not so much to look for highly developed christological elements in the lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth, but the other way round: starting from the historical experience of Jesus as prophet of the nearby kingdom of God (I was about to say, wrongly, to enable us to grasp the low-christological implications of the post-Easter confession of Jesus. That would be incorrect, yet it is not a bad way of putting it) – hence starting from the impression the earthly Jesus made on his loyal followers, to give us a better grasp of the theological drift of the church's kerygma and the first credal trends. Jesus of Nazareth is, after all, the norm and criterion of the Christian faith. For me as a Christian, so is Chalcedon: but under the compelling norm of the same Jesus Christ, whom this council − within the to us alien framework of the specific and specifically Greek [485] philosophical inquiry of those times − likewise took to be the norm and criterion of its own dogmatic definitions, because the Christians (church leaders) who attended the council confronted the same question: how do we

formulate our experience that decisive and definitive salvation from God comes solely through Jesus Christ, who was truly man, without surrendering what is equally precious to us, our Judaeo-Christian heritage of strict monotheism, and recognizing a 'second God' alongside the living God?

(b) Jesus of Nazareth, identified as the eschatological prophet, clarifies the early beginnings of New Testament Christology and its four credal models, as well as the early use (prior to any influence of gentile Christian churches) of the affirmation that Jesus of Nazareth is 'the Christ, the only begotten Son, our Lord'. This in no way denies that Hellenistic thought played a part in the later version of the New Testament, where we hear voices of Christians who had been not only non-Jewish but actually pagan (Hellenistic Syrians, or whatever). It *does* mean, however, that for decades the very earliest Christianity was conveyed exclusively by Aramaic-speaking and Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora, and that the fundamental christological interpretation of Jesus had already been formed before a single gentile Christian could have contributed to it. In light of the literature of the past ten years it can hardly be denied that 'Hellenism' did have a very early influence, via the Greek-speaking Jews, and even that these Diaspora Jews were the most active in early Christianity. But those Jews, once returned to Jerusalem from the Diaspora, moved by the deep Jewish spirituality centring on the religious cult of Zion (in Jerusalem they had several Greek synagogues), were inspired by the ancient faith of Israel, and were not uncritical of the by then 'established' Judaism. What they contributed (albeit in Greek models) was 'more Jewish' than the official religion! In spite of and even *in* their many Hellenistic conceptions, they were devoted heart and soul to the (anti-gentile) spirituality of the Bible (they were the *Greek* version of the most authentic 'Israel').

Hence in order to grasp the early Christian credal models at their source, as well as the implications of the earliest (pre- or post-Easter) identification of
[486] Jesus with the eschatological prophet of God's reign for men's salvation, we must explore the broad range of meanings that the eschatological prophet of grace and judgment spontaneously evoked for a Jew of that period, both in Jerusalem and, maybe more especially, in the Diaspora. Other ideas, Jewish and non-Jewish, had broadened this original meaning, deepened it or even distorted it; yet for that very reason the study of the original Christian impulse is (not the only vehicle of salvation, it is true, but still) extremely important, because it permits us to test this earliest as well as the later Christian interpretation by the sole criterion: Jesus of Nazareth. For it is a sociological fact that once an interpretation has been given, it acquires a life of its own; and then its further history *may* become a pure history of 'ideas', divorced from the reality it is meant to reflect: the Nazarene. This typically human process no one − and in particular no Christian − should lose sight of.

Basic to the early Christian interpretation of Jesus as the eschatological 'messenger from God' is a Deuteronomic text (see Deut. 18:15) from Exodus, which played an important role in the Judaic exegesis practised by the first Christians. 'Behold, I send my *messenger* [*aggelos,* angel] before you, to guard you on the way and *to bring you to the place which I have prepared.* Give heed to him and *hearken to his voice, do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him. But if you hearken attentively to his voice* and *do all that I say,* then I will be an enemy to your enemies and *an adversary to your adversaries. My messenger shall go before you'* (Ex. 23:20-23; see 33.-2).[87] We are not concerned with modern exegesis of the passage, but with the Jewish tradition that grew out of it and was flourishing in Jesus' time, thus providing the christological interpretation of Jesus as the eschatological messenger with the conceptual framework from which its Christology was born. It is often said that the New Testament seeks to interpret Jesus 'according to the Scriptures' (for us the Old Testament) and not according to Jewish inter-testamental literature. In a formal sense that is correct; but according to the principles and practice of ('charismatic' and prophetic) scriptural exegesis in those days the distinction is fairly irrelevant, because it is difficult to differentiate meaningfully between 'Scripture' and 'scriptural interpretation' at the time.[88] (Even medieval theologians described both the Bible and patristic biblical exegesis simply as 'Holy Scripture', *Sacra pagina.*) What functions in the New Testament is not an 'objective' Bible, but Scripture in the prevailing exegetical [487] style, that is, in line with that of inter-testamental literature (making it a positive aid to understanding the New Testament). Hence the whole semantic field covered by the concept of 'end-time prophet' in Jesus' time is pertinent to a proper comprehension of it. So when we come across concepts such as (full) authority, Christ, Lord, Son of God, et cetera in the New Testament, the main interpretive principle must surely be: to which tradition complex does the use of these terms in a particular context actually belong? Only then can we consider to what extent other traditions, whether New Testament or late Judaic, have been amalgamated with it.

The cited concept of the Deuteronomic messenger − which is also the basis of the passages from deutero-Isaiah and trito-Isaiah cited above − sees the prophet as the messenger from God, 'something of God' who sent him: God's name is set upon the envoy. In synagogue circles in the Diaspora (Septuagint version) God's name, *Adonai,* was *Kyrios,* Lord. Thus the name *Kyrios* was conferred on the messenger sent by God. For that reason Jesus was called 'Lord', *Kyrios,* or in Aramaic *Maran* (basis of the first credal strand in both the

[87] All the passages italicized are those which are applied in the gospels literally to Jesus as the 'messenger from God' and in that way find their first Christological implications.
[88] Giblet, *Messie prophète,* 122-123.

Q community and in Mark). Judging by the old formula in the Greek gospels, *Maran atha* (incorporated into the liturgy), the kyrial interpretation derives not from Hellenistic religions but from a Palestinian setting.[89] In tradition history Jesus' *Kyrios* name is originally located in the messenger concept of Deuteronomic Judaism. God's name − *Kyrios ho theos* − is set on the prophetic envoy of God. Hence anyone who acknowledges God's messenger in effect confesses God; whoever rejects him commits a sin – one which, says Mk. 3:28-29, is unforgivable[90] ('for he will not pardon your transgression', Ex. 23:21). This clearly continues to apply in Matthew and Luke: 'So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven' (thus the Matthean version, Mt. 10:32-33=Lk. 12:8-9); hence: 'Blessed is he who takes no offence at me' (Mt. 11:6=Lk. 7:23). Both series of texts come from the messenger tradition of the Q source. But not only Mark and the Q community (in independent texts, Lk. 12:8-9 parallels); John in his own way says exactly the same thing: 'He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day' (Jn. 12: 48).[91] These sentiments − whether 'authentic Jesus material' or not − in the consciousness of a prophet, and certainly of one who
[488] knows himself to be the prophet of God's nearby kingdom (and no exegete would deny that Jesus had that awareness) are explicit elements, as it were, of the then current Deuteronomic and Judaic notion of a 'messenger from God'. This implies prophetic identification with the cause of God, with God himself: God's name, the Lord, is set upon him. Mark 3:28 equates God's name, set upon the Christ messenger, the anointed prophet, with *Pneuma,* the Spirit (whereas Mark is the evangelist who distinguishes so sharply between Jesus and the Spirit). Hence in Mk. 3:28-29 (as opposed to Mt. 12:32 and Lk. 12:10) rejecting the earthly Jesus is an unforgivable sin. This is understandable when Jesus is seen as the end-time prophet, that is, the messenger of God's final offer of grace. The attitude taken towards this messenger has eschatological relevance; it is a definitive decision for or against God, who sent him.

[89] According to Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 349 the *kyrios* title is an amalgam of the Aramean '*mar*' Christology, the Hellenistic *kyrios* cult and the '*Kyrios ho Theos*' usage of the Jewish synagogue; this last title is obviously a term from the Greek synagogue (W. Kramer, *Christos, Kyrios Gottessohn* [AThANT, 44] (Zürich 1963), 157). The question is what was the original occasion for further assimilations.

[90] Berger, *Amen-Worte,* 36-40.

[91] Is not this exactly the same 'Jesus logion' as in the synoptics? Almost without exception the study of Jesus is wrongly restricted to the synoptics; why, since all the gospels are 'theology' as well as being at the same time a memory of Jesus' earthly life? Although the entire Johannine gospel is highly sapiential (this is not yet the same as what will later be called a 'high Christology', whereas the synoptics are said to be marked by a 'low Christology'), it is in fact just an elaboration of the theme of the 'messenger of Wisdom', identified with the Wisdom of God, who sent him as a messenger.

Accepting or rejecting Jesus is a decision between salvation or damnation. The New Testament concept of Jesus' *exousia* or authority (exegetes argue about whether it was before or after Easter) takes its original meaning from the Deuteronomic tradition of the (eschatological) messenger from God.

The concept acquired a further dimension as a result of the resurrection, expanding Jesus' authority to include the final judgment: he is the son of man who is judge of the world (the first credal trend with its two subsidiary strands in Mark and the Q community). On the strength of the resurrection Jesus is also 'Lord of the future'. And this latter concept was further elaborated by invoking other traditions: Ps. 2; Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13-14, so the resurrection/exaltation adds eschatological depth to the end-time concept of 'Lord', which is ascribed to Jesus because of his mission as the eschatological messenger from God. In the Christian community the messenger idea was extended to include the 'messengers of Jesus Christ': 'I say to you, he who receives anyone whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me' (Jn. 13:20); this corresponds with the concept of 'apostle' in 2 Cor. In his own person the messenger must 'stand down' to permit identification with the cause of God − for the apostles the 'cause of Christ' − entrusted to him (2 Cor. 4:5).

The Johannine gospel as a whole becomes intelligible on the basis of an admittedly highly sapiential interpretation of the eschatological prophet from God. For by Jesus' time (and even before that) the concept of the Deuteronomic messenger had come in contact with later Wisdom literature. God's messenger is a 'messenger of Wisdom', sent by it or, in high-sapiential circles, identified [489]
with Wisdom, which was already hypostatized and existed with God 'before all creation'. In this tradition, then, prophets were identified with archangels, with the 'Logos of God', with the 'Wisdom of God', or with patriarchs like Moses and Abraham who dwell with God. Enoch is identified with the Wisdom of God (or 'Wisdom with God') as well as with the heavenly being called 'son of man'.[92] As mentioned above (with reference to the third credal model), Wisdom is God's intermediary in creation. John's 'sending' formulae and his conception of Jesus as the Word of God, the Logos, instrument of creation, become understandable when we consider how the tradition of the eschatological prophet came to be merged with the later Judaic Wisdom tradition, just as in the Greco-Jewish phase of the Q community the concept of messenger was developed in a (low) sapiential context. In Judaic exegesis the source text of the messenger tradition − the *aggelos,* angel or messenger of Ex. 23:20 − was already identified with the prophet Elijah, who was due to return as the eschatological prophet. In the literature of the period Wisdom, who

[92] Enoch, 41:9; 42:1-3; 48:7; 51:3; see Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* l.c., 411.

pitches her tent among men (see Jn. 1:14; *eskènôsen*), is mainly the Torah, Jacob or simply 'the eschatological prophet'.[93] In other words, the relationship with God is determined by way of an earthly figure in which Wisdom has come to dwell − a view which clearly governs the synoptic qualification of Jesus. God has set his own name upon the messenger; so the identification of Jesus with Wisdom expresses the validity of his message and ministry as the eschatological prophet. 'Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist' (1 Cor. 8:6): in this perspective the Pauline passage does not have to mean what it would signify in a post-biblical, philosophical context, but could be interpreted in the sapiential sense (close to reality in its own way) of an envoy sent by God (see also Jn. 1:3-10); what happens here is an unprecedented revelatory event, divinely endorsed, hence bearing the stamp of full prophetic authority.

By virtue of this messenger concept the prophet is addressed not only as 'master' and 'teacher' (Mk. 10:17-18; in Jn. 3:2: 'a teacher come from God'; Mk. 7:28; 11:3; 14:14; Jn. 13:13, 16; Lk. 9:54 and 10:1), but also as 'Lord'. The latter has often been explained either in the sense of a form of address, 'Sir', or as what is known as the high-christological *Kyrios* title (already loaded in the Pauline corpus on the basis of the resurrection). Yet this *kyrie* form of address
[490] occurs even in the Q source in messenger contexts, for instance where it concerns Jesus the prophetic miracle worker (Lk. 10:17; Mk. 9:38; cf. 1 Cor. 12:1-3; James 2:1 with 2:7). With Paul this 'Lord' concept − even when he very occasionally cites a logion of Jesus of Nazareth ('to the married I give charge, not I but the Lord', 1 Cor. 7:10, and: 'Now concerning the unmarried I have no command of the Lord', 1 Cor. 7:25) − has no doubt already been 'fortified' by his understanding of the resurrection/exaltation; on the other hand he continues in line with the messenger tradition to distinguish clearly between 'one God, the Father' and 'one Lord, Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. 8:6); these are pronouncements about a messenger come from God. When the centurion, in asking Jesus for help, addresses him as 'Lord', the Q community has him use (irrespective of the resurrection) the typical form of address for a 'messenger from God the Lord', the messenger on whom God's name, 'Lord', is set and who, therefore, may also be addressed as 'Lord'. A striking example of the *kyrios* conception of the prophetic teacher as God's envoy is the saying (difficult to understand outside this context): 'Good Master, what must I do ...? Jesus said to him: Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone' (Mk. 10:17-18). Albeit without using the term 'Kyrie', this text accurately reflects the reaction of the messenger tradition of Deuteronomic Judaism. The

[93] Syr. Ap. Baruch, 3:38-4:1; cited by Berger, ibid., 412, footnote 2.

messenger's authority, his teaching and goodness have their source in God who sent him, not in himself. Does John not present the same reaction on Jesus' part when, admittedly in a high-sapiential sense, he nonetheless says: 'The Father is greater than I' (Jn. 14:28)? And when after an impressive speech and miracle by Barnabas and Paul an enthusiastic crowd, already acquainted with the *theios anèr* concept, exclaimed: 'The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men' (Acts 14:11; also 28:6), do not Paul and Barnabas − messengers of Jesus the Lord − do the same as Jesus, by repudiating this non-prophetic identification with God and saying 'that they are but men', although bearing a message from God (Acts 14:14-15)? Leaving aside the differences, what the refusal to let themselves be called 'good' (Jesus) or 'divine miracle worker' (Paul and Barnabas) does in both instances is to clarify the proper meaning of 'messenger', at the same time repudiating any *theios anèr* tendencies which, for monotheistic Jews, were an anti-Yahwist abomination.[94]

The fact that, in a perspective of the messenger tradition, God as Lord is indeed manifested in the messenger is a view common to all apocalyptic literature.[95] This Jewish epiphany of God has a very different basis from the [491]
Hellenistic *epiphaneia* of God in human beings. The connection between the eschatological 'messenger from God' and his *Kyrios* name is still evident in the christological hymn of Phil. 2:9-11, which plainly expresses the messenger tradition of Deuteronomic Judaism, albeit linked with and set in the framework of the Wisdom tradition (in which the ancient concept of messenger found its proper context in that period, attested by the 'messenger of Wisdom' in the Q community and the synoptics): 'Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' The name of God, the Lord − that is (as a Greco-Jewish definition of the tetragram), 'the name above every name' − is set upon Jesus, assigned to him as a messenger who has been sent by God, arrives in a strange land and then, his task accomplished, lays it again at God's feet. Thus in the apocalyptic literature Enoch and Moses, both envoys whom God has taken up, receive the name of God himself: they are called 'the Lord'. Enoch even acquires the seventy − all seventy − names of God[96] and is given lordship,

[94] At the same time this makes it evident that the 'criterion of irreducibility' employed for this text is insufficient to establish the words: 'Why do you call me good?' as an authentic saying of Jesus The saying fits in completely with the reactions of the 'messenger from God' in this tradition complex – though there is a greater chance that the messenger himself (in this case, Jesus) said it than that the church should so emphatically have put it into Jesus' mouth.

[95] Dan. 5:1,13; Testamentum Levi 2:11; Test. Zabulon 9:8; *Oracula Sibyllina,* 8:318; see Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* 419.

[96] Berger, for Enoch, l.c., 414-415; for Moses: 416.

power and authority over every creature. (In this same literature the name given to Moses, 'Lord of all the prophets', implying that all the prophets received their teaching from him, is applied to Jesus in Rev. 11:8b.) That God's own name should be conferred on the prophet of God, more especially on the eschatological messenger, is quite conceivable in a Jewish context; it goes back to an Old Testament tradition, which the Greek-speaking Jews of Jesus' time placed in a late sapiential setting. It certainly does not conflict with strict Jewish monotheistic thinking. It is in those very circles in the early Jewish Christian community that Jesus is first called *Mara* (or *Maran*), *Kyrios* − and not against a Hellenistic religious background.

This prophetic identification of the eschatological messenger with the name of God himself, the Lord, is the origin of the four credal strands (manifestly of the first three; whether that is also true of the Easter Christology will become clear later).

Even more important is the fact that the 'christ' title (not in the Davidic sense) is essentially also part of the tradition of the eschatological prophet. For he is the one (see Is. 61:1-2) anointed with God's Spirit, the messiah, with a
[492] non-royal, non-Davidic connotation (and in that sense 'non-messianic'; but to speak thus is to disregard a particular Jewish messianic tradition and so contrast Christian messianism wrongly with the pluriformity of Jewish messianism). Because of the teaching function of both priest and prophet the concepts of 'the prophetic' and 'the priestly' had already been amalgamated with this non-Davidic messianism of the last prophet. In Jesus, therefore, the prophet messiah was also the true interpreter of God's Torah, the true 'servant of Yahweh', even the new lawgiver, the new Moses.

In view of the memories − in the earliest stages of Christianity for the most part still verifiable − of the actual ministry of Jesus of Nazareth,[97] of which New Testament creeds are by and large a reliable echo, the original Jewish Christian naming of Jesus as the Christ, the messiah, clearly had nothing to do with the particular messianic expectation of a primarily national/political restoration of Israel. The only element in Jesus' life that might point in that direction is the (so far not satisfactorily resolved, precise significance of the) 'cleansing of the temple' by Jesus (see above). Considering the historical weight of evidence about Jesus' actual conduct, the Davidic messianic interpretation does not qualify as a real interpretation of Jesus (although it was to play a not inconsiderable role in the interpretation of Jesus' resurrection in the sense of exaltation − but this presupposes prior interpretation of Jesus as eschatological prophet). In their original rejection of a dynastic Davidic messianism the first Christians (themselves Jews) were in no way anti-Jewish;

[97] Th. Boman, *Die Jesus-Ueberlieferung,* 62-67.

they were merely resorting to other (equally Jewish) messianic models. John indicates even more clearly that in early Christian tradition they were not playing off a Christian notion of the messiah against a Jewish one, but that under the pressure of Jesus' historical manifestation the Christians chose the eschatological prophet from among the many Jewish christ models available: the messianic prophet (Jn. 1:25,41), the anointed (*masjiach*) and bringer of good news in Is. 61 and 52 (with associated tradition complexes).[98]

The fact that the Christ title is focal in the New Testament appears not only from the statistical frequency of the term (readily accessible with the help of R. Morgenthaler),[99] but chiefly and with greater theological precision from Jesus' double name: this prophet is called 'Jesus Christ'. A striking expression in Matthew is 'Jesus who is called Christ' (*Jèsous ho legomenos Christos*) (Mt. 1:16; 27:17) and 'Simon who is called Peter' (*Simon ho legomenos Petros*) (Mt. 4:18; [493]
10:2). Elsewhere they are called 'Jesus Christ' and 'Simon Peter', as well as simply 'Christ' and 'Peter'. Just as Peter is for Simon, so Christ is a theological proper name for Jesus: their eschatological function is added to the personal names Simon and Jesus. This is not a demotion of 'Christ', a name outweighed by the more impressive epithet 'the Lord', but an official title,[100] added to the personal name (customary at the time). The three pillars of the early church, John, James and Peter (also the witnesses in the transfiguration story with its recognizably eschatological purpose), are the only ones in the synoptic account of the calling of the twelve to have an eschatological name added to their own: James Boanerges and John Boanerges, that is, 'son of thunder': by receiving that name they are both appointed heralds of the eschatological judgment (a fundamental kerygma of the Jerusalem congregation of which, along with Peter, they were the mainstays). Such naming is based on a calling and commission. Thus the naming of Jesus as the Christ in Acts 2:36 is seen as a divine installation: 'Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.' In the tradition recalled here Jesus gets that name in and through the resurrection, seen as an anointment (*chrisma*) (cf. Acts 4:27). In Acts 10:38 the anointment with the Spirit is also associated with Jesus' baptism in the Jordan (as in the synoptics). On each occasion the anointment as Christ is inspired by Is. 61:1-2. Luke 4:18 refers expressly to it. In Lk. 2:26 anointment (as Christ) is linked with Jesus' birth, in line with the tradition complex about the prophetic messenger, the one filled with the Spirit, who was called 'from his mother's womb' (Is. 49:1-3).

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[98] See P. Stuhlmacher, *Das paulinische Evangelium,* 148-151.
[99] R. Morgenthaler, *Statistik des neutestamentlichtn Wortschatzes* (Zürich 1958), and: *Statistische Synopse* (Zürich 1971).
[100] Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* 391-392.

These Lukan passages show that the name 'messiah' or 'christ' (in many interrelated units of early Christian tradition) is connected, not with the tradition of national and political messianism, but with the Jewish tradition of the christ figure of the eschatological prophet, the one anointed with God's Spirit, servant of Yahweh, in a close relationship with God.

This one 'anointed with the Holy Spirit' (Is. 61:1; see 52:7), interpreted in Judaism as the eschatological prophet and identified by the Christians with Jesus, is associated with diverse key notions in early Christianity: gospel, bringer of glad tidings, anointment, calling and election, reign of God, apostle, the 'Spirit of God who rests on . . .', covenant, as well as light of the gentiles
[494] and, finally, peace (Is. 61:1-3; 42:1ff; 49:1-2; 51:16; 52:7; 59:21). In particular the conjunction of Christ with gospel in the New Testament is grounded in this tradition of the eschatological prophet.[101] In this prophetic tradition complex the end-time prophet who 'brings the good news', the gospel (Is. 61:1-2), is also referred to as the 'light of the world' (Is. 42:6-7,16; 49:6; 50:10; 51:4-6). Final prophet, gospel and universal perspective (light of the world) were already linked in this Jewish tradition before Christian times. In principle the early Christian writings identifying Jesus with the Christ, the eschatological prophet 'filled with the Spirit', already posed the problem of mission among the gentiles, as well as the Pauline question about the end of the Law. For in Judaism the Law had come to be called the 'light of the gentiles',[102] while (Greek-speaking) Jewish Christians in particular (Jews already open to the gentiles) now called Jesus the Christ the 'light of the gentiles'.

In late Jewish tradition the anointed one of Is. 61:1-2 was often closely linked with an image of Samuel, who acquired traits of the priestly model in the Levitic tradition: he is referred to as the 'christ' as well as *lumen gentium*.[103] His appearance among the people of God is portrayed almost as a theophany, in much the same way as Luke (clearly inspired by that precedent) describes the birth of Jesus as the Christ.[104] For Luke (in his gospel as well as in Acts) the Christ title evidently lies in this 'christ Samuel' strand of tradition (albeit mixed with Davidic messianic traditions), even before we get to Lk. 2:11: 'I bring you good news of a great joy... for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.' In this Jewish christ tradition, moreover, the figure of Samuel in its turn merged with the coming Elijah figure.[105] O. Steck and Kl. Berger rightly conclude from this that the milieu which nurtured and transmitted this priestly prophetic christ tradition was a group of instructors in the Law and the synagogue, who represented the legacy of the prophetic and

[101] Stuhlmacher, ibid., 148-151; Berger, ibid., 393.
[102] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 27-28.
[103] Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* 394.
[104] R. Laurentin, *Structure et théologie de Luc, I-II* (Paris 1957).
[105] The Samuelian christ-figure; in Ps.-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum,* 59.

Levitic tradition,[106] faithful upholders of the Deuteronomic messenger concept.

Thus in some circles the old royal messianism, partly following one of the two messianic strands already outlined in Zech. 4:3,11-14, made way for the prophetic messianic and priestly prophetic 'messianic' line of the Judaic christ tradition. Priest and prophet-teacher merged into a single figure, so the end-time prophet and the high priest of the last days were seen as one. In this tradition complex the christ idea suggests a priestly conception of the end-time [495] prophet (especially as elaborated in the Letter to the Hebrews). The priestly-prophetic anointment − *chrisma* – in question is seen as anointment by the Spirit relating to revelation, teaching and the grace-filled spiritual gift of insight into what has been revealed. In both the Johannine (1 Jn. 2:20,22,27; Jn. 14:26)[107] and the Pauline conceptions (2 Cor. 1:21-23; Eph. 1:13) this is transposed to Christian anointment leading to spiritual insight; the notion 'enlightenment' on becoming Christian (or at baptism) was undoubtedly influenced by this Jewish christ tradition. Conversion to Christianity is envisaged as an anointment according to the Jewish model of the conversion of a gentile to the Jewish Torah − that is, surrender to and acceptance of a doctrinal tradition. The anointment is described as spiritual enlightenment and is frequently portrayed as a vision, analogous with 'call' visions.[108] In the Jewish christ tradition and the priestly interpretation of the end-time prophet 'being anointed' means being instructed in God's mysteries and will, in doctrine.

So when Jesus is called the Christ in this tradition he is clearly interpreted as the end-time prophet who possesses 'the true doctrine', the Spirit-anointed one who speaks truthfully and definitively about God and his law, hence about what a human being ought to be.[109] Anointment by God's Spirit, in other words 'being christ', indicates the divine origin of the wisdom that this prophet proclaims. Hence there is no need to think in terms of esoteric, gnostic influences when John has Jesus say: 'I have taught them all that I learned from thee, and they have received it; they know with certainty that I came from thee; and they have had faith to believe that thou didst send me' (Jn. 17:8, NEB); or: 'The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works' (14:10); 'for I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak' (12:49): these are all notions deriving from the old Jewish 'messenger' tradition, albeit in a later high-sapiential framework.

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[106] Steck, *Gewaltsames Geschick,* 196-212; Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* 394.

[107] See I. de la Potterie, 'L'onction du chrétien par la foi', in Bibl 40 (1959), 12-69; J. Ysebaert, *Greek baptismal terminology* (Nijmegen 1962); Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* l.c., 395-396.

[108] Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung,* 27-28.

[109] Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* 396.

Paul's use of the Christ title in an evangelical context is also in line with the Deuteronomic 'messenger' tradition, interpreted in the sense of the trito-Isaiahan passages, expounded in the Judaism of the time as the 'arrival' of the eschatological prophet who brings the good tidings (Is. 61:1-2; 52:7) of God's rule (Is. 52:7) and upon whom God's Spirit rests, thus putting God's words into his mouth for ever, under an eternal covenant with God (Is. 59:21). The
[496] priestly, end-time prophet, the Christ, brings sound, true doctrine concerning the one true God and thus about men as well. *That* was what Christians saw realized in Jesus of Nazareth.

A typical passage is Mt. 11:2: 'Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent his disciples and asked him, "Are you he who is to come or shall we look for another?"' The deeds of the anointed, spoken of in Jewish tradition, are included in Jesus' reply via the reference to Is. 61:1-2 and Is. 35:5-6, already associated in Judaism with the end-time prophet who 'proclaims good news to the poor' and 'makes the blind to see and the lame walk'. All the strands of the end-time prophet converge in this 'Christ', Jesus of Nazareth. In that Matthean passage the Christ title is unmistakably set in the tradition of the priestly-prophetic eschatological prophet (see also Mt. 26:28; Col. 2:8, 20-21; 1 Cor. 4:15).

But that is not all. Sayings about the parousia make no reference to the Christ title, whereas it features prominently in sayings about Jesus' death and resurrection.[110] This tallies with the Deuteronomic tradition of the messenger concept (prior to Chronicles),[111] which subsequently (see Neh. 9:26; Wis. 2:19 and the whole complex 2 to 7; Ezra 9:10-11; Zech. 1:4-6; 7:7, 2) became linked with the rejection of the messenger 'from God' and his prophetic martyrdom: prophets are put to death according to this Jewish tradition. The book of Revelation – manifestly recalling the tradition of two end-time prophets – recounts the end of their lives dramatically: 'because these two prophets had been a torment (to those that dwell on the earth)' (Rev. 11:3-10). The New Testament is constantly alluding to this tradition.[112] Prophets are killed because, as men who preach repentance and demand conversion, they inculcate God's law. Prophetic martyrdom was a truism in Jesus' time − a standard *theologoumenon* in religious circles.

The fact that Jesus is explicitly called Christ in New Testament passages that speak of his death confirms that he came across to the disciples as a prophet, more especially as the end-time prophet who recalls God's back-sliding people to the 'true law', summoning them to *metanoia* and conversion, but whose

[110] W. Kramer, *Christos,* l.c., 139.
[111] Steck, *Gewaltsames Geschick,* 64-77.
[112] Mt. 5:11-12 par. Lk. 6:22-23; Mt. 23:29-36 par. Lk. 11:47-51; Lk. 13:31-33,34-35 par. Mt. 23:37-39; Lk. 11:49ff. See below: the death of Jesus.

prophetic mission brought him to a fall. Thus the motive for Jesus' execution is that Israel's leaders saw him as the *antichrist*, the pseudo-prophet of the end of the age, the adversary who leads the people astray and into apostasy.[113] This explains the early Christians' insistence on the Christ title in connection with Jesus' death: this man, Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified one, he alone is the true [497] Christ, the anointed one of the last days: the true messenger of God, empowered with full authority from God, the true magisterium. In this context martyrdom serves to corroborate Jesus' message and prophetic authority: it confirms the identification of the person of Jesus as the Christ, rejected, it is true, but the real eschatological prophet. 'You stiff-necked people . . . you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one' (Acts 7:51-53) (see 1 Pet. 1:10-11; Lk. 24:25-26; Acts 26:22-23). Here, too, the death of the messianic christ figure is a pre-Christian, Jewish idea, and, initially, not a Christian, 'anti-Jewish' conception of messianism. In this Jewish and Christian tradition Jesus is called the Christ because as the eschatological prophet he speaks about God and thus, by interpreting human ethics as obedience to God's will, offers an accurate, true interpretation of what it means to be human; that is why he, too, was put to death. For that reason even the Easter Christology (the fourth credal strand) was originally grounded in and justified by the Christians' identification of the person of Jesus with the eschatological prophet.

Thus it was the salvific nature of their experience with the earthly Jesus which convinced these Jews that Jesus was the fulfilment of their expectations of a christ. His public ministry − viewed from whatever existential point of departure − was such that for Jews who were open to his manifestation it would inevitably prompt thoughts of the eschatological prophet. *Jesus* spoke the truth about God and man and concretized it in his conduct. Only in him true conversion to the living God is granted and a right relationship to other people delineated. Paul saw this clearly: Jesus conveys 'true knowledge of God' (2 Cor. 2:14), thanks to the Spirit (see Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:19; also 1 Pet. 1:11). Despite their doubts and questioning, this was the ground of the disciples' trust in Jesus of Nazareth even before Easter. Explicit recognition that Jesus was the end-time prophet of God's approaching kingdom and reign provided fertile soil for the growth of Christology proper in the first few Christian generations.

The following, in conclusion. We have said that the title 'the Son' already featured in the 'low' christological tradition of the Q community, more particularly in a complex which clearly relates to 'the messenger of wisdom'

[113] See below (significance of the death of Jesus). The eschatological pseudo-prophet or 'anti-Christ' was also a commonplace in the Judaism of Jesus' time. (Especially Apoc. Eliae).

[498] (Mt. 11:27=Lk. 10:22; in the context of Mt. 11:25-27=Lk. 10:21-22). There Jesus is 'the Son' who reveals God's eschatological mysteries to 'the little ones'. That is now conjoined with Jesus' complete authority as the messenger from God. This situation, historically confirmed, raises the question whether the 'father-son' relationship in the New Testament likewise coheres with the 'messenger' concept, at any rate in its sapiential version. That appears to be the case. One finds, on the one hand, that where God is called Father, Jesus for his part is described as *Kyrios,* which in itself might suggest the notion of the prophetic 'Lord'; on the other hand, where Jesus is called 'Christ', God is referred to as 'the Lord'.[114] This is no coincidence, but points to a relation between tradition complexes. We find a similar use of terms in pre-Christian statements about Enoch and post-Christian statements about Ezra.[115] In late Jewish literature on the 'messenger' concept and influenced by the sapiential tradition God, the one who sends the messenger, is called Father: source of the message and teaching conveyed to man by his son, the messenger (see the aforementioned Q passage). In this tradition the father-son relationship − the envoy as opposed to God − actually acquires a touch of intimacy.[116] Especially in Wis. 2:13, 16d and 18, also in 9:4b, 5a, it seems that *pais* (*puer,* child), *doulos* or servant, and *huios* or son of God are synonyms: God is the Father of the sage, the wise one who partakes of the paternal instruction; the initiate is 'the beloved'. The *abba* form of address, therefore, is appropriate in this sapiential tradition; it expresses true knowledge of, and the right relationship to, God. The final prophet is son of God because, initiated into God's wisdom, he speaks about God to men; and he is able to do that because he is christ, anointed by the Spirit − 'Spirit of sonship' (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 3:26; 4:20). 'For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known' (Jn. 1:18):[117] here John renders, in a high-sapiential pronouncement, the prophetic tradition of the father-son relationship, applied christologically to Jesus the Christ, 'taken up in the bosom of the Father';[118] he is the true 'exegete of God' (*ekeinos exegèsato*). He is the final messenger from God: the Son. His intimate fellowship with God who sent him − 'I am not alone, for the Father is with me' (Jn. 16:32)

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[114] 1 Thess. 1:1,3; Gal. 1:1,3; Rom. 1:4; 15:6; Phil. 1:2; 2:11; 1 Cor. 1:9;8:6; Col. 1:3; Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:1-2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Philem. 3.

[115] Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* 422.

[116] In the Test. Levi 17:2-3 it is the high priest's privilege 'to address God as father': *'Lalèsei Theôi hōs Patri';* see also in the renowned Greco-Jewish romance of conversion, *Joseph and Asenath,* 12-13; cited in Berger, *Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund,* 423, n. 3.

[117] Into the bosom of the Father, or of the fathers (e.g., 'into Abraham's bosom', Lk. 16:22) are *taken up* those who keep the commandments of the fathers and their teachings, and have faithfully handed them on. What it says in the Greek is: *eis ton kolpon;* after his death, as pre-existent Wisdom and messenger, Jesus is received (back) into the Father's bosom. The variant 'the only begotten *Son'* is to be preferred to 'the only begotten God'.

[118] M.E. Boismard, ' "Dans le sein du Père" (Jo. 1:18)', in RB 59 (1952) 23-39.

− is the source and ground, even the guarantee of his message, his exposition of God's law and of all his words and deeds. In full accord with that we have: 'Call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven' (Mt. 23:9) – a similar messenger reaction as in the logion, 'Why do you call me [499] good?' The concept of the messenger in Ex. 23:20 − 'Give heed to him' and 'obey his word and do what I say to you' − evidently functions throughout the New Testament: 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him' (Mk. 9:7, in a context where the eschatological Moses and Elijah figures also appear). In the Judaic messenger tradition the title 'son of God' refers not to the Davidic but to the prophetic messiah. According to the New Testament, therefore, anyone who takes Jesus to be 'just a human being' like everyone else –'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon?' (Mk. 6:3), or 'Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?' (Jn. 6:42) − has not understood him; he has yet to be converted, for Jesus is God's eschatological envoy and to reject him is to reject the one whom God has sent, the Son, hence to blaspheme against God (Mk. 3:28-29). In those passages ('Is not this the carpenter …?') we still hear the questions that Jesus evoked during his life on earth: is he perhaps the end-time prophet for anyone who sees beyond purely human affirmations? 'For I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me' (Jn. 17:8); 'All that the Father has is mine' (Jn. 16:15b). These (along with many other comments by John) express the identification of Jesus with the Christ, the Son of the messenger tradition, blended with more recent Wisdom traditions: Jesus, the eschatological prophet of God's year of grace.

D. CHRISTIAN PROPHETIC/SAPIENTIAL INTERPRETATION OF JESUS AS THE MESSIANIC SON OF DAVID AND REJECTION OF DYNASTIC/ DAVIDIC MESSIANISM

Ps 110:1 undeniably fulfils a key function in the interpretation of Jesus after his death. This psalm conveys, on the one hand, that Jesus was already exalted 'at the right hand of God' and, on the other, that the 'subjection of all the powers' had *not yet* been accomplished (Ps. 109 according to the Greek version): 'Sit at my right hand until (*heôs an thô* . . .) I make your enemies your footstool.' (Especially in Greco-Jewish Christian circles this text was used to convey the 'already' and 'not yet' of salvation. Thus Mk. 12:36 is clearly citing the Greek Ps. 109.) Even before the liturgical separation in the mother church of [500] Jerusalem between Aramaic- and Greek-speaking Jewish Christians − apropos the affair centring on the 'Stephen' party or Greco-Palestinian Jews − Jesus had already been acknowledged by both parties as 'Jesus, our Lord' − which is why

these bilingual Greek-speaking Judaeo-Christians in Jerusalem, following persecution by the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, had taken the *maranatha* with them to the places to which they fled. Even before Saul's conversion to Christianity (three or four years after Jesus' death) Jesus was venerated as 'Lord', so it had nothing to do with specifically gentile Greek influence. These same Greco-Palestinian Jewish Christians contributed significantly to the development of a christological interpretation of Jesus. Hence the future of Christianity was not decided by Paul's Hellenistic congregations, as is often said, but by the Greek-speaking Jews who had fled from Jerusalem (with their Jerusalem Christian legacy) to Syria (Damascus and Antioch). They spread a Christian interpretation of Jesus, on the basis of which − primarily through Paul's theology − a Torah-free Christianity was proclaimed, probably with some conciliatory action by Simon Peter, who championed a middle position in relation to Aramaic- and Greek-speaking Jewish Christians (see the council of Jerusalem). What is clear is that, especially in Greek-speaking Jewish circles, 'messiah' and 'son of man' were used interchangeably even before Christianity.[119] In this regard Christians emphasized that the Jesus handed over to the Romans and crucified was the true messiah. For them 'Christology' and 'scriptural proof' (based on the earthly Jesus) were one and the same thing. That is why among them 2 Sam. 2:7 and Ps. 2 as well as Ps. 8 and Ps. 110 play a fundamental role in the Christian interpretation of Jesus; and to counter Jewish objections, Jewish Christians especially used Ps. 22 and selections from Is. 53. All this may categorically be described as pre-Pauline, not just in the sense of literary activity prior to Paul but also as indicating the substance of what Jewish Christians had already achieved before Paul's conversion.[120]

In our analysis of Jesus' self-understanding, which was articulated in his prophetic message concerning the approach of God's reign and in his conduct, we discerned no element pointing to dynastic Davidic messianism. All the evidence suggests that Jesus was the eschatological prophet and thus the prophetic messiah: the one filled with God's Spirit, the end-time messenger or envoy of God (Is. 52:7; 61:1).

[501] Nevertheless, Ps. 110:1 became the *locus classicus* in early Christianity, the 'scriptural proof' of Jesus' resurrection and/or exaltation.[121] This use of

[119] See Ethiop. Enoch 48:10; 52:4; 4 Ezra 13:1-13, 25; Strack-Billerbeck, I, 485-486 and 956-957, in which one sees a messianic interpretation of Dan. 7:13. Cf. Ph. Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 175ff; Balz, *Methodische Probleme,* 48ff; especially U. Müller, *Messias und Menschensohn in jüdischen Apokalypsen,* 107-153.

[120] M. HengeL 'Christologie und neutestamentliche Chronologie', in *Neues Testament und Geschichte* (Zürich-Tübingen 1972) (43-68), 46 and 62.

[121] E.g.: 1 Cor. 15:25; Rom. 8:34 (cf. Col. 3:1 and 1 Pet. 3:22); Eph. 1:20; Hebr. 1:13; 1:3; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:3; Mk. 16:19 (in the appended ending). In the synoptic tradition Ps. 110 is cited on the one hand in the question concerning the son of David (Mk. 12:35-37 par. Mt. 21:41-45; Lk. 20:41-44) and, on the other, in the passion narrative (son of man tradition) (Mk. 14:62 par. Mt. 26:64; Lk. 22:69).

Scripture initially formed part of a Christian interpretation in which, on grounds of his resurrection and/or exaltation, Jesus was appointed or acknowledged as Christ, the Messiah.

In the pre-Markan tradition (still discernible in Mk. 12:35-37, specifically Mk. 12:35b-37a) the idea is explicitly refuted − with the aid of Ps. 110 − that the coming messiah would be of Davidic descent. While teaching in the temple Jesus once said: 'How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, declared, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet" [Ps. 110:1]. David himself calls him Lord; so how is he his son?' (Mk. 12:35-37). Although there is no exegetic consensus on the interpretation of this passage,[122] a thesis previously advocated by many exegetes is now once more accepted, with supporting argument, by both Chr. Burger and G. Schneider.[123] Davidic descent is not considered an absolute requirement for being messiah. Thus, at any rate initially, Ps. 110 provided the Christians with arguments, on the one hand, to contest Jesus' Davidic origin and on the other to justify their calling him messiah (and even son of David).

The import of Mk. 12:35b-37a seems originally to have been a debate about the coming messiah. Some people, more especially the Pharisees (see *Psalmi Salomonis* 17:21-25), were interested primarily in the messiah's dynastic/ Davidic lineage; others entertained a Davidic messianism free from any genealogical concern. Thus when Christians faced the objection that the son of David came from Judah (Bethlehem) and could not be a Galilean or a Nazarene, they could (in accordance with a particular Jewish tradition) advance sound counter arguments. That was not all. In Jesus' time the Jews did not give Ps. 110 a messianic interpretation,[124] so it provided the Christians with a ready argument against a genealogical origin of the son of David. David himself, in a prophecy, had called the coming messiah the Lord, *Kyrios* (see especially the Septuagint, Ps. 109:1); that is to say, David's prophecy confirms the Christian affirmation that Jesus is the Lord. (In Acts 2:32-36 Jesus the messiah's Lordship is demonstrated with reference to Ps. 110.) Thus there is

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Finally Acts 2:34 and (implicitly) 5:31 and Rev. 3:21.

[122] Two interpretations are current: (a) Jesus knew himself to be the Davidic messiah; (b) messianic Davidic status, as applied to Jesus, is part of the church's theology (Bultmann, *Tradition,* 146; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 114). As for the implication of Mk. 12:35-37, it has been expounded in three ways: (a) Jesus intends to silence his opponents with this question; (Ps. 110:1) (b) it is meant to be a positive answer to the question: is Jesus indeed the messianic son of David? (J. Jeremias and many others); (c) Mk. 12:27 is a rhetorical question, to which a negative reply is expected: as David himself refers to the messiah as his Lord, then the messiah cannot be a son of David (W. Wrede; R. Gagg; M. Goguel; E. Haenchen and many others). A good survey of the exegetical state of affairs is provided by G. Schneider, 'Die Davidssohnfrage (Mk. 12:35-37)', in Bibl 53 (1972) (65-90), 65-87.

[123] Chr. Burger, *Jesus als Davidssohn* (Göttingen 1970), 52-9; G. Schneider, *Die Davidssohnfrage,* l.c., 83 and 89, n. 1.

[124] See Strack-Billerbeck, IV, 452-465. See also Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 127, n. 1.

every reason to suppose that the pre-Markan tradition understood the pericope (Mk. 12: 35b-37a) negatively: Jesus was not descended from the dynastic line of David (Mark was therefore still unaware of any Christian tradition that located Jesus's birth as a dynastic/Davidic messiah in Bethlehem
[502] in Judea. The latter was a positive answer to what was probably the same line of inquiry.) The negative answer was not meant as an outright Christian repudiation of the national/political messiah, but as a refutation of the claim that Jesus was known to be of the house of David. The Johannine gospel, too, knows nothing of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. In fact, in this gospel the birth of the dynastic son of David in Bethlehem is adduced as an argument against Jesus' messianic status (Jn. 7:41-42; these verses indeed say a great deal!). The fact that even in the later Epistle of Barnabas (12:10-11) Ps. 110:1 provides scriptural grounds for denying that the (Jesus-)messiah must be of dynastic Davidic origin points to a particular tradition in which Christians felt sure that Jesus was not of Davidic 'royal blood'. 'Son of David' in this tradition has theological rather than historical significance (a *theologoumenon*). The pre-synoptic tradition, therefore, is fairly negative about Jesus' Davidic descent (and this seems to tally with the historical facts).

Mark himself, however, puts the tradition he was given in a totally new context; perhaps he no longer even knew (in contrast with his tradition) that according to the Pharisaic view 'son of David' implied descent from the royal dynasty. At any rate, for him Jesus is the messianic son of David, a *theologoumenon* from the Jewish tradition (see Mk. 10:47,48). Yet Jesus is more than that: he is the Lord and Son of God. The question is, then, what Mark means when he calls Jesus truly David's son. In other words: which tradition is he working with? From the foregoing it is clear that when the title 'son of David' is applied to Jesus, it is not based on genealogical memories or family trees, neither Joseph's nor Mary's.

In Greek-speaking Jewish Christian circles, where the term 'messianism' sounded a different note, they followed another route. While Davidic messianism was their starting point, they gave it a prophetic, Levitical and sapiential interpretation in which 'the son of David' itself had already become a *theologoumenon*. That is why they could as readily speak of Jesus the son of David as of the prophetic figure 'anointed with the Spirit'. So Mark interprets his − in this sense, negative − source positively (albeit without any thought of genealogical descent): Jesus is the messianic son of David. Neither do Matthew and Luke find anything about Jesus as the dynastic/Davidic messiah in their
[503] own non-Markan traditions; they are completely dependent on Mark whom they subject to further redaction to correspond even more closely with Davidic messianism. In the Markan gospel, then, the earthly Jesus is indeed seen as the son of David, but construed as 'the miracle worker' (Mk. 10:46-52). Jesus' entry

into Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1-11) is also explained by Mark as the messianic son of David going up the city. The fact that the messianic son of David is already linked with 'the miracle worker' in Mark (10:47-48) becomes even more conspicuous in Matthew. Here Jesus as messianic son of David is simply a 'miracle worker': it is in a context of healing and exorcism that he is entreated, 'Son of David, have mercy on me' (Mt. 9:27; 15:22; 20:30,31; 21:9,15; 12:23; Lk. 18:38-39). A second striking feature is evident after Peter's confession of the messiah in the Markan gospel (8:29), when he balks at the prospect of the son of man's suffering. As a result Jesus calls him a satan! Many commentators regard these two messianic traits as specifically Christian, a break with Jewish messianism.[125] Yet it is these two features of the New Testament concept of the messiah − the messiah, the son of David, is a miracle worker and exorcist, and he must suffer − which in tradition history point to the Jewish prophetic/sapiential concept of the messianic son of David (see above). In other words: in the choice between two Jewish schools of 'Davidic messianism' early, perhaps mainly Galilean, Christianity was unable, on the basis of recollections of Jesus' life on earth, to opt for an interpretation grounded in the dynastic/Davidic, national/political concept of the messiah; nor did it design a Christian messianic concept of its own. Instead it resorted to the prophetic/sapiential notion of the messianic son of David (see above). Various facts illustrate the point.

The son of David as miracle worker and exorcist is altogether foreign to dynastic/Davidic messianism. Since in the synoptic tradition it is as miracle worker and exorcist that Jesus is entreated 'Son of David, have mercy on me', the New Testament clearly perpetuates a Solomonic wisdom messianism. In particular there is the typical New Testament insistence that the crucified one is Christ, the messiah. A radical switch from a Jewish national/dynastic David concept to the Christian concept of the suffering messiah in the short timespan of the very earliest Christianity is simply inconceivable; for that to have happened, there had to be earlier Jewish postulates. We have seen (prompted mainly by a comparison of studies by L. Ruppert, G. Nickelsburg Jr. and Kl. Berger, working independently) that the idea of a wise but 'suffering messiah', even a suffering (though not dynastic) son of David, was familiar to Greco- [504]
Palestinian Jews. On the basis of the still modest case presented by Mark, the Matthean gospel's rendering of the import of the 'Davidic messiah', which early Christianity applied to Jesus, clearly points towards the deutero-Isaiahan 'christ' tradition blended with the Solomonic 'son of David': miracle-worker and exorcist. 'Something greater than Solomon is here' (Mt. 12: 42). Matthew typifies *ta erga tou Christou* (Mt. 11:2), that is, Jesus' messianic activity with

[125] Thus e.g., Hahn, *Hoheitstitel, 262;* Ph. Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 185; Chr. Burger, *Der Davidssohn,* 44.

reference to the expulsion of demons: the blind see, the lame walk. And people ask: 'Is he not the son of David?' or say: 'He is from Beelzebub.' From the angle of tradition history these summarized 'works of the messiah' have nothing to do with the expected arrival and activity of the dynastic son of David. Jesus is the messiah *because* he cures the blind and the lame, et cetera, not in spite of it! (The 'in spite of' applies only to one particular Jewish tradition.) Christianity has obviously taken over (for its interpretation of Jesus) the Jewish tradition in which the prophetic and sapiential messenger tradition had fused with that of the messianic son of David. Adopting the name 'the servant' (*pais,* attendant, servant, 'child') in Mt. 12:18-21 clearly comes from this prophetic sapiential tradition in Is. 42:1-4. In a similar context Mark 3:11 speaks of the 'son of God'. The New Testament does not endorse this strand of Jewish tradition without substantiation: someone greater than Jonah is here − an eschatological prophet; greater than Solomon, the eschatological king of the royal/sapiential tradition (Mt. 12:41-42). The connection between healings, exorcisms and proclamation of the gospel makes no sense at all in terms of the older dynastic/Davidic messianism, but certainly does on the basis of the deutero-Isaiahan end-time 'christ prophet', who has taken on the characteristics of the Solomonic son of David.

The synoptic writers' concept of gospel can only be fully understood in terms of the deutero-Isaiahan messiah prophet in the Deuteronomic tradition of the messenger concept. Jesus, who works miracles, cures sick people and drives out devils, refuses to perform legitimating miracles (see Part Two). In the gospels Jesus' resurrection is God's sole legitimation. Prior to that he refuses to provide any legitimation: (a) In the temptation narratives he would not perform 'pointless' wonders that do nobody any good; but for a lot of people that rendered his ministry ambiguous, since people filled with unclean
[505] as well as clean *pneumata* or 'spirits' also performed miracles. Jesus declined to perform miracles for his own advantage − even to legitimize 'his spirit' as the *Pneuma* of God; the temptations in the wilderness vividly illustrate this. 'If you are the Son of God' (Lk. 4:9; Mt. 4:3,6) is clearly reminiscent of Wis. 2:18. (b) Even at his crucifixion Jesus refused to perform miracles to legitimize his claims: 'He saved others; he cannot save himself' (Mt. 27:42; Lk. 23:35, 37, 39). In a sense this is a repetition of the Satanic temptations in the wilderness, but Jesus refuses to entertain them. That is the 'messianic secret'. Only after death will God justify him in the resurrection. Now is the time of *peirasmos,* of testing: refusing to employ divine powers to personal advantage. (c) Jesus repudiated Peter, who acknowledged the messiah but expected sensational supporting evidence, as the voice of Satan. God's prophet 'bears witness'; he is to be believed on the strength of his actions, his wisdom and the content of his message; he performs miracles and exorcisms when others in distress ask for

them, not to legitimize his own mission. That entails testing, suffering, even martyrdom. Only the one who sent him, God, will produce the legitimizing proof: his resurrection from the dead, or his death itself (which is an exaltation, first phase of the eschatological events). Being the messiah implies, then, suffering and martyrdom, because the prophet declines to legitimize himself to his own advantage (Mk. 15:29-30,31-32). Jesus was in fact condemned as the 'Adversary', the pseudo-prophet who cannot vindicate himself (Mt. 26:68). (d) Even before the crucifixion, at the hearing of the Sanhedrin, Jesus refused to reply (Lk. 22:67d; 20:18; Jn. 10:24-25; see Greek Jer. 38:14-15; 38:45; 41:28). The Christian community fully understood this tradition complex regarding the prophet who suffers but is legitimized by God: Jesus' refusal to speak is followed by his ominous warning of the judgment to come (Mk. 14:62b). For those who refuse to acknowledge God's true representative, that rejection will be held in evidence against them in the eschatological judgment; thus the rejected one is the judge. Of course, the question is: who is blaspheming God, Jesus or his present judges? (Mk. 14:63-64). Who has the Spirit of God? Jesus, who refuses to justify himself, is indeed condemned now; but in virtue of his martyrdom the condemned one is the eschatological witness, prosecutor and judge (Mk. 14:62); the 'hereafter' of Mt. 26:64 makes it clear that the Christians already identified the person of Jesus with the son of man/judge.

All this points to just one tradition complex: the concept of 'the messenger', the prophet − the eschatological prophet with some features of the [506] prophetic/sapiential son of David: Jesus of Nazareth, of whom it was remembered that he went about doing good to others, healed the sick, drove out devils, but refused to perform any legitimizing action in his own interest − as though the freedom to do good were not in itself sufficient legitimation.

Another striking feature is that the end-time Solomon, 'the son of David', would demolish the temple. This logion was transmitted separately, without any mention of rebuilding. Here we have the tradition of the potentially destructive authority (the prophetic imprecation), while the logion about rebuilding likewise comes from the Solomonic tradition;[126] in this tradition the authority of the prophet was already associated with the power of the Solomonic son of David to construct a completely new temple within a short period of time.[127] This, based on Jewish models, is the 'kingly messianism' of the New Testament.

The meaning of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1-10 parallels) − the subject of much exegetical debate − also becomes intelligible in the context of this particular messianic tradition. That this was a procession of Jesus with his companions − entering the gates of Jerusalem as pilgrims, praying and

[126] Berger, 'Die königliche Messiastraditionen', 9.
[127] L.c., 21.

exulting in expectation of the coming reign of God − would seem a fair historical assumption.[128] But that the Christian account of it was originally non-messianic remains to be proved. The only question is: which messianism did the Christians have in mind? We know from the Jewish historian Josephus[129] that a Zealotic messiah wanted to enter Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives with an armed force in order to establish the reign of God. Christians portray Jesus' messianic entry into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass, as that of the 'meek messiah', in other words, the prophetic/sapiential son of David. 'The coming one' − *ho erchomenos* − is greeted with jubilation:[130] that is, not a kingdom of God yet to come, yet to be established, but Jesus appearing in Jerusalem − especially in the temple (for that is the whole point) − is the coming here and now of the wise king/messiah Jesus who would institute 'the kingdom of our father David' (Mk. 11:10).[131] In this (Jewish) tradition the king/messiah is 'the meek one' (Wisdom), who refuses to anticipate God's anger (see Lk. 9:54); he restricts himself to imparting wisdom from God and the summons to *metanoia.* The meek and gentle messiah is not a Christian inversion of the Jewish idea of the messiah, but rather a reaching out, under pressure of the historical reality of Jesus, for a different, equally Jewish,
[507] messianic concept. As wisdom's messenger Jesus' teaching meant 'learning meekness from him' (Mat. 11:29-30) for his listeners.

Kl. Berger even ventures (and speaking independently, though not in messianic terms, L. Ruppert says much the same) to view Wis. 2 and Wis. 5 as the foundation or model of the gospel genre.[132] 'Gospel' in the New Testament grew from the prophetic/sapiential struggle to legitimize the sonship of God as the status of the one who presented himself through his conduct and activity as the (end-time) prophet. It finds expression in the temptation narrative, in Jesus' acts of power, in various disputations and teaching discourses, in his dealings with tax collectors and sinners, his cleansing of the temple, his trial, on the cross. The gospel response is: Jesus refuses to justify himself in his own interest; he is condemned as a false prophet and, through diplomatic deployment of the term 'king of the Jews', is handed over to the Romans. Only through the resurrection does God vindicate his envoy − after his suffering and death. This deutero-Isaiahan, sapientially interpreted 'prophet of God' and 'anointed one' is linked with Davidic messianism by way

[128] In my opinion F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 87-88 and 264 and Chr. Burger, *Der Davidssohn,* 46-52, are correct in this matter.
[129] *De bello Judaico,* 2, 261-268 (see above).
[130] G. Schneider, *Die Davidssohnfrage,* l.c., 65-90; Kl. Berger, l.c., 31.
[131] This is not at all 'un-Jewish', as Chr. Burger, *Der Davidssohn,* 50, and Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 264, maintain, but prophetic/sapiential, Greco-Jewish; Kl. Berger, l.c., 31, n. 118, and G. Schneider, *Die Davidssohnfrage,* l.c., 88.
[132] Berger, l.c., 35, n. 128.

of the tradition of Solomon as 'son of David', the one initiated into God's wisdom (Wis. 7). Only later, and secondarily, were Psalms 2 and 110 used as proof texts. This Davidic/messianic, prophetic tradition confirms what has already been said: the notion of an eschatological 'messianic prophet' (in that sense: the son of David) is the link between Jesus of Nazareth and the kerygmatic Christ. Jesus is the 'anointed' or messianic revelation of God.

All this is supported by Rom. 1:3-4b where, in terms of a pre-existence theology of his own, Paul incorporates an older catechesis or creed. In this letter to the Christians in Rome Paul cites an earlier creed[133] that goes back to Greco-Jewish Christians. Mistakenly, a binary − 'two-stage' − Christology was usually (more or less with exegetic consensus) read into this: the earthly Davidic messiah and his eschatological messianic status. Exegetes generally agree that what is interposed between 'gospel of the Son of God' and the concluding 'Jesus Christ our Lord' (both Pauline redaction) is a pre-Pauline formula that had undergone some prior development. At least three stages of that earlier development are to some extent ascertainable. (a) In the very oldest phase of this tradition the credal statement went more or less as follows: 'who was of the seed of David − and because of his resurrection from the dead showed himself to be the Son of God'. (b) In a later phase that was elaborated as follows: in his life on earth Jesus was 'of the seed of David according to the [508]
flesh, but he showed himself to be the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness (*kata pneuma hagiosunès*) by reason (and from the moment) of his resurrection from the dead'. This, too, seems to be pre-Pauline. (c) Lastly, the Pauline version which we find in Rom. 1.3-4b in a pre-existence Christology: through his resurrection Jesus, the Son of God who became 'son of David', has been exalted as 'Son of God in power'.

In its earliest phase this passage seems to be in the prophetic-sapiential tradition; that is to say, Jesus is 'of the seed of David', he is a Jewish man and belonged to Israel as the people of the promise.[134] Elsewhere we read: 'according to the flesh Jesus is of the race of the patriarchs' (Rom. 9:5), that is, a true Jew − but through the resurrection it has become clear that he is truly 'Son of God'.[135] In his days on earth as a Jew Jesus already was the Son of God, but

[133] *Literature.* H. Schlier, 'Zu Rom. 1:3-4', in *Neues Testament und Geschichte* (O. Cullmann zum 70. Geburtstag) (Zürich-Tübingen 1972), 207-218; B. Van Iersel, *Der Sohn,* 71-75; H. Flender, *Die Botschaft Jesu,* 19-22; H.W. Bartsch, 'Zur vorpaulinischen Bekenntnisformel im Eingang des Römerbriefes', in ThZ 23 (1967), 329-339; E. Linnemann, 'Tradition und Interpretation in Rom. 1:3-4', in EvTh 31 (1971), 264-275; Chr. Burger, *Jesus als Davidssohn,* 25-35; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 251-258; Kl. Berger, 'Die königlichen Messiastraditionen', l.c., 17.

[134] 'Of the seed of David' does not of itself carry any messianic implication; it is not (as is commonly assumed) another version of 'son of David'. The term means simply: a Jewish male. See, for instance: 'He who keeps the Law is *of the seed of David*' (Ethiop. Apoc. Ezra; Kl. Berger, l.c., 17, n. 62). See Gal. 3:16.

[135] '*Horidzein*' not only has the meaning of 'being appointed' (as it is usually translated) but also of 'being legitimated', 'showing oneself as': *then* (with the resurrection) it becomes evident what Jesus

he refused to legitimize his mission to his own advantage in any way. His earthly life remained ambiguous, therefore; only through the resurrection did God prove that this Jewish man was and is indeed 'the Son of God'. This duality refers not to a 'two-stage' Christology but to something else, explained in the second phase of the credal confession on 'sapiential' lines. Exegetes disagree on the question whether 'according to the flesh' and 'according to the Spirit' are Pauline or pre-Pauline.[136] True, in his letters Paul uses the contrast between 'flesh' (*sarx*) and 'spirit' (*pneuma*) (Gal. 4:29; Rom. 8:4ff), but − according to H. Schlier[137] − the expression *pneuma hagiosunes* is clearly non-Pauline (hence pre-Pauline). This term is apparently the Greek rendering of the Hebrew for 'exaltation', 'holiness', and especially 'power and glory'. 'The Spirit of holiness' (Rom. 1:4) would then signify: Yahweh's holy exaltation and power as an intrinsic feature of his *doxa* (glory). 'According to the flesh', that is, from the human point of view, Jesus manifestly appeared as a Jewish man, but from a 'pneumatic' viewpoint grounded in revelation it is clear that over and above that − demonstrated by his resurrection − he is the 'Son of God. As such he has the universal significance that makes him Christ for the gentiles as well. 'According to the flesh' and 'according to the Spirit' are not meant to express Jesus' two different modes of being, but point to the domain 'outside wisdom' on the one hand and 'inside wisdom' on the other − a Jewish sapiential antithesis. In this confession Christians seek to express their belief according to a particular schema: that of the 'hidden status' and 'disclosed status' of the Son
[509] of God − a schema that was to structure the entire gospel of Mark (the so-called 'messianic secret'): in his earthly life Jesus already was the Son of God, but this only became apparent after his suffering and death, with the (legitimizing) resurrection. That legitimation and its public promulgation cannot be anticipated. I have difficulty reading this early text as a reaction to a baptismal 'adoption Christology' − in the sense that the latter would postulate that Jesus became Son of God at his baptism in Jordan; in that case the oldest stratum of this credal formula would supposedly see Jesus 'instituted' as Son of God only from the moment (and also by reason) of his resurrection.[138] This does not seem to tally with the complex underlying tradition complex nor with Mark's view (Mk. 12:35-37) in conjunction with Mk. 1:11, 9:7 and 15:39; although a son of David (Markan redaction of 12:35-37), Jesus is already 'adopted' as Son of God at his baptism (Mk. 1:11), proclaimed at the transfiguration (Mk. 9:7) and acclaimed by all after his death (Mk. 15:39).

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is. This meaning occurs in contexts such as Rom. 1:3-4. See Berger, l.c., 17.

[136] According to Bultmann, *Theologie,* 52-3, this antithesis is an instance of Pauline editorializing; according to many other commentators it is actually pre-Pauline.

[137] Schlier, l.c., in *Neues Testament und Geschichte,* 211-212.

[138] The Jewish formula *'anastasis nekrôn',* with the New Testament *'ek'* (see below), points to a very ancient tradition.

Whether Mark had the enthronement ritual in mind is neither here nor there; it is impossible to overlook the three salient 'phases' in his gospel. Hence for Mark Jesus was the son of David even during his days on earth; but he was more: only with the resurrection, on the basis of his suffering and death, does it appear (at any rate, appear fully) that he was and is 'the Lord of David': Son of God.

Thus a very ancient Christology is founded on the idea of the legitimation of the (end-time) messenger from God, whose earthly life remains ambiguous for anyone who demands knockdown proofs of legitimation, but which nevertheless yields its secret in the context of a specific Jewish conception of the Son of God as it emerges particularly in the Book of Wisdom, chapters 2 to 7 (a basic theme to be found in all sorts of variations, e.g. Is. 52-5;1 Enoch 62-63 and 46; 2 Macc. 9; 1 Macc. 6; Assumption of Moses 10; 2 Baruch 49-51, etc.): only through suffering and death, the martyrdom of the prophet, does one enter the *basileia* (Wis. 2:19); thus the resurrection is the public inauguration of Jesus as the true king. Jesus' life on earth was the time of mortification and testing. Even if 'son of David' (even though it is not written here − it only says 'Jewish man') were an honorific title, here it refers to the earthly mortification. Salvation only fully begins when the previously 'disguised' king is publicly vindicated. The initially hidden identity of Jesus of Nazareth is not just a (literary) device used by Mark but an almost universal datum in early Christianity, present in this pre-Pauline tradition as well as in the pre-Markan tradition and the Q community; it is the hermeneutic horizon of New [510] Testament Christology as a whole. H. Flender,[139] to my mind rightly, sees in Rom. 1:3-4 the structure of the Markan gospel in miniature; but that structure will have to be interpreted differently, and in any case not as a 'two-stage' Christology. The suggestions put forward by L. Ruppert, who assigns Wis. 2 to 5 a key function in the gospels (in which Wis. 2 and 5 − the suffering and exalted one − come to be seen as a Jewish 'updating' of the *Ebed Yahweh* of the 'Isaiahan' tradition), as well as the prophetic/sapiential conception of the king as interpreted by KI. Berger, and finally the recent analyses of intertestamental material by G. Nickelsburg,[140] all lead to the conclusion that the ideas (from a longer tradition) concentrated in Wis. 2 to 5 served as a model for the genre 'gospel' − which arose (see Part Two) in a Greco-Jewish environment: what we have in the gospels is a contest about the legitimation of the 'Sonship of God': in Jesus' miracles, in his temptations in the wilderness, in his disputations and teaching discourses. And all this culminates in suffering and death. Only after

[139] H. Flender, *Die Botschaft Jesu,* l.c., 19-20.

[140] Kl. Berger, 'Die königlichen Messiastraditionen', 33, n. 128; L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende Gerechte?* (the book's thesis); G. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, immortality and eternal life in intertestamental Judaism* (Harvard, Cambridge 1972), especially 49-143.

his deliverance − his resurrection from the dead − can it be said that he truly is the 'Son of God' (Wis. 2:18). He was not appointed 'Son of God' at the resurrection, but only then was it apparent (or, for the Markan gospel, from that moment on we have firm ground to believe that it will appear at the parousia). Therefore the judgment on Jesus' opponents is already accomplished at the resurrection (while for Mark this judgment coincides with the parousia).

Luke for his part combines the two Davidic/messianic traditions. But first and foremost he wants to set these traditions in God's overall plan of salvation. This is expressed very well in Acts 13:16-41, where Luke presents an 'apostolic sermon' in a Diaspora synagogue − at Antioch − and, for obvious reasons, places it in Paul's mouth (although the whole sermon is Luke's own composition, based on his own christological design). He wants to connect all that happened to/through Jesus of Nazareth with God's saving deeds in Israel over the centuries – their eschatological fulfilment is the 'Jesus event'. The audience comprises Jews and 'God fearers', that is, gentile sympathizers (Acts 13:16,26). It has to do with the God of Israel (13:17), the fathers (13:17), specifically Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Three great saving acts of God are remembered: the choosing or election of Israel, 'making Israel great' in Egypt,
[511] and lastly the Exodus (13:17). This was followed by the journey through the desert and taking possession of the promised land (13:18-20). The way leading to Christ is depicted as a lengthy preparation by Israel's God. The period of the judges and particularly of king David is recalled (13:20-22). God was in control of Israel's entire history: Jesus is the messianic son of David (13:23). Just as God testified to king David (13:22 *marturèsas)* by 'raising him up' (*egeirô* 13:22; not in the sense of resurrection but in the Old Testament sense of calling and having him appear as a prophet), so Israel's God testifies to Jesus: this is 'the man after God's heart, who in everything will do God's will' (see 13:22b). Jesus is 'Israel's deliverer' (13:23), that is, messiah. This again links the history of Jesus to Israel's whole salvation history: Israel's God fulfils his ancient promises to his people in Jesus the Christ (13:32-33); to put it differently: the God who acted in Jesus is none other than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Israel and Jesus are inseparable. Yet there is a discontinuity: Jesus' rejection by 'those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers' (13:27). But God continues to bear witness to Jesus by raising him from the dead (13:30-31). Thus the resurrection becomes the fulfilment of ancient promises (13:32-33).

Because of the 'apostolic sermons' (Acts 2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:9-12; 5:30-32; 10:34-43; 13:16-38), and especially on the basis of Acts 2:22-36, it was usually thought (right up to the present) that Luke is conveying a very ancient Christology, which sees Jesus as being appointed 'Christ the Lord' only by virtue of his resurrection and from that moment (Acts 2:36). People saw in

those passages a very early Christian homiletic scheme with a twofold structure; the two parts had originally formed separate traditions that had subsequently merged: on the one hand an interpretation in which Jesus was regarded as the messianic son of David sent to Israel, on the other the risen crucified one, the 'redeemer of the world'.[141] But U. Wilckens advances good grounds for the claim that Luke himself arranged these 'apostolic sermons' as a single composition, using − within the distinctively Lukan Christology − what the tradition already contained about Jesus Christ. So what has been called 'very early' turns out in fact to be a late − Lukan − Christology. People found this early Christology (which certainly appears elsewhere in the New Testament as well) mainly in Acts 2:36; 'Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.' But the 'therefore' (meant for the reader) is clearly intended as [512] the conclusion of the entire homily (2:14-35): God predestined Jesus to be Lord and Christ. He accomplished it in Jesus' whole life history: his mighty acts, miracles and signs (2:12); his rejection and execution 'according to the plan and foreknowledge of God' (2:23); in raising him from the dead (2:24) and by seating Jesus at his right hand (2:25) − by way of resurrection (2:32), exaltation (2:33) and sending of the Spirit (2:33) (which is linked with his exaltation) (2:33, 34): by all these acts God made him 'Lord and Christ', Luke concludes (2:36). What Luke presents is not bits and pieces of two originally divergent interpretations, but a single coherent, personal view of Jesus, the preordained Lord and Christ of salvation history, and of God's own plan of salvation accomplished in the concrete history of Jesus. Luke seeks to show that God was 'with this anointed one' all the time (Acts 10:37-39). 'God was with him' from the beginning (2:22; 10:38); yes, from birth he was the 'Son of God' (Lk. 1:32, 35; 3:22; 4:3; 8:28; 9:35; 22:70).

It is remarkable that in other passages in Acts Jesus is referred to not as the messiah, but as Jesus Messiah, Jesus Christ. These passages occur in a (broadly speaking) liturgical context (preaching; baptism; exorcism): 2:38; 3:6; 4:10; 10:36,48; 15:26; 16:18. All other passages in which 'messiah' or 'Christ' is explicitly taken to mean 'the one anointed with God's Spirit' (the so-called apostolic proclamation to the Jews) were composed by Luke himself and set in a context of missionary preaching to the Jews (including Greek-speaking Jews). Their tenor is: messiah is this very Jesus of Nazareth, that is, the crucified one (2:36; 3:18,20; 4:26; 5:42; 8:5; 9:22; 18:5, 28).

In the process Luke consistently stresses the relationship between Jesus and

[141] See U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* (Neukirchen 1963²); J. Dupont, *Études sur les Actes des Apôtres* (Paris 1962); D. Delling, 'Israels Geschichte und Jesusgeschehen nach Acta', in *Neues Testament und Geschichte* (Tübingen 1972), 189-198; H. Flender, *Die Botschaft Jesu,* l.c., 19-22; Chr. Burger, *Jesus als Davidssohn,* l.c., 137-145; Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 242-279.

the Holy Spirit, and between the exalted Jesus and the outpouring of the promised Spirit (Acts 2:33). Jesus lives because he is 'indwelt' by another, the Holy Spirit. That is why in his earthly life power goes hand in hand with goodness (2:22 and 10:38), a sign that God is 'with him' (2:22; 3:14; 10:38): God is at work in Jesus. In the second phase, Jesus' death and resurrection, the bond between Jesus and God is even more explicit; Jesus is God's possession: 'your holy one', 'your servant (or 'child')', 'his messiah', 'my son' (see 2:27; 3:14; 4:27; 13:35; 3:13; 3:26; 4:27; 4:30; 3:18, 13:33). Whereas elsewhere the New Testament usually refers to 'the Christ', Luke talks about 'the Christ of God' (Acts 3:18; Lk. 9:20,23,35; see Acts 4: 26-27). It emphasizes God's saving activity in and
[513] through Jesus. He is the 'Christ of the Lord' (Lk. 2:26). His rejection by men is counterbalanced by his belonging to God, undisturbed even by death. Finally, Jesus appears in his glorified state endowed with transcendent new gifts that put him in a relationship with all, Jew and gentile alike: he is 'the Lord of all' (2:36; 10:36), 'judge of the living and the dead' (10:42), 'saviour' (5:31; 13:23), given by God to the world as its final redeemer (3:20; 4:12; 10:43; 13:38).

At the same time Luke is aware of dynastic Davidic messianism. This tradition surfaces especially in Lk. 1, where Jesus is 'of the house of David', evidently in a historicizing sense. How did Luke connect this with the actual life and lot of Jesus of Nazareth? By means of the non-dynastic, prophetic/sapiential 'son of David': a prophet who was rejected appeared, ipso facto eschatologically, as witness for the prosecution (or as judge); thus he functions as a royal judge. Furthermore, according to Judaeo-Greek wisdom ideas a prophet's martyrdom issues in ultimate royal sovereignty (see above). The synthesis is readily detectable in Lk. 22:29-30: 'As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Here the 'universal world rule' of the sapiential martyr tradition is linked with national/Davidic governance of Israel's twelve tribes. In Acts 2:29-30 Luke shows clearly that Davidic and prophetic messianism had already run together: David himself is both king and prophet. Luke never says that Jesus is placed on David's throne (Acts 13:32-37); he uses Ps. 2:7 only to show that he is the Son of God. Jesus is Son of God because the *Pneuma* of the Father is in him (Acts 2:33). He does not associate Jesus' sitting as king at God's right hand with Israel. According to Luke, therefore, Jesus' exaltation is in no sense the fulfilment of the promise of David's throne in Lk. 1:32-33. Thus in Luke dynastic-Davidic messianism is at odds with the usual prophetic/sapiential messianism of the son of David in the New Testament, and this also governs his Christology: for him 'son of God', 'child' (*pais*) and 'messiah' (christ) are synonymous, as they are throughout this sapiential corpus (see Acts 4:26-27 and Lk. 3:22; Lk. 4:9: 22:69-71).

Conclusion. New Testament 'messianism' reminds us of three pre-canonical currents: initially Jesus was not held to be the dynastic/Davidic messiah; indeed, this interpretation was rejected; in certain, particularly Greek-speaking Judaeo-Christian congregations (in which the messiah concept was [514] incorporated into other prophetic/sapiential eschatological concepts of salvation) Jesus was indeed seen as the Davidic-messianic, end-time saviour figure, but in a universal rather than a national sense. Thus the dynastic David Christology does little to clarify the Christian interpretation of Jesus' exaltation. In line with the Old Testament Jesus appears and acts as a Jew − in the theological capacity of 'son of David' − only for the benefit of Israel's eschatological expectations of salvation as projected in the Old Testament. His earthly life is an intra-Jewish event, but on the plane of Jewish eschatological expectations: he is the eschatological prophet with (sapiential) Davidic/ messianic attributes, and at the *eschaton* God will lead all nations to Zion. To that end Jesus was baptized, anointed with the Holy Spirit. Only through his resurrection, exaltation and investiture with power does it become apparent that he is 'Lord of all' (Acts 10): that is 'the message concerning the Son of God' (Rom. 1:1-33), 'the glad tidings of Jesus Messiah, Son of God' (Mk. 1:1). Jesus as son of David would seem to be a *theologonmenon* in certain early Christian circles, without further implication for an updated Christology. Dynastic/ Davidic messianism with its own 'lord', 'son' and 'christ' tradition undoubtedly affected the initial identification of Jesus with the end-time, definitive 'messianic' prophet also by way of pre-Christian contamination of these originally divergent traditions). But dynastic/Davidic messianism with its triumphalist traits was applied to the risen Jesus only to explain the resurrection as exaltation. The dynastic/Davidic christ tradition in itself did not provide an experiential framework for proclaiming the dead Jesus to be, in spite of everything, the risen one. Without prior, existing Jewish models it would have been impossible for Christians to remodel a triumphalist, Jewish messiah concept into the notion of a suffering messiah within a few years. What is more, Jesus' earthly ministry totally contradicted the christ idea of dynastic/Davidic messianism. But there was a model of the 'suffering messiah' in Judaism itself. Only this prophetic messianism (the end-time prophet, wise and filled with God's Spirit), already merged with the sapiential 'suffering and righteous one' and the 'wise man put to the test', could supply (in face of the actual events of Jesus' life) the grounds and conditions for experiencing Jesus, after his death, as the risen messiah. '*Makaridzei eschata dikaiôn*' (Wis. 2:16c): the fact that the righteous one is glorified and becomes king is an eschatological event! Then and only then, as a secondary stage, could the Easter experience be [515] further explicated with the aid of passages like 2 Sam. 7; Psalms 2:7 and 110:1, as well as with the son of man tradition as it had developed in Judaism from

the Greek Dan. 7:13-14 − although to my mind it remains a question whether the next step was from recognition of Jesus as the eschatological Christ prophet to the exaltation or *Kyrios* Christology of 2 Sam. 7, Psalms 2 and 110, or (chronologically, that is) first to a son of man Christology (Dan. 7:13-14), which in its turn was a bridge to the 'king' Christology, as it was originally called. This uncertainty relates to the complete lack of scholarly consensus on the New Testament 'son of man'. A historically verifiable chronology may well be out of the question, because (starting from the messenger idea) the two subsequent developments of Jesus' identification with the prophetic christ could have originated simultaneously in different early congregations and only when they encountered each other − at a pre-canonical stage – coalesced in the New Testament. At all events, for the tenor and purpose of this experimental Christology the problem strikes me as secondary. Fundamental to it was the identification of Jesus' person with the messianic prophet of the end-time gospel of God's approaching reign, as a link between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ. It shows that, at the root of the various traditions that converge in the New Testament and as the matrix of its different Christologies, there is a basic vision with a fundamentally uniform identity. Despite considerable variation Jesus comes across in the same way in all early Christian traditions. The unity appears to be more universal and profound than the pluralism. This, to my mind, is crucial; it confirms the initial working hypothesis: broadly speaking, the New Testament is a realistic (faith motivated) reflection of the *historical* ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

Section Two

DIRECT HERMENEUTICS OF THE RESURRECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Literature. Besides the literature on Jesus' appearances mentioned in Part Two, see especially: L. Bakker, 'Geloven in de verrijzenis', *Bijdragen* 28 (1967), 294-320; H.R. Balz, *Methodische Probleme der neutestamentlichen Christologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1967); I. Berten, *Histoire, révélation et foi* (Brussels, Paris 1969); C. Bussmann, 'Themen der paulinischen Missionspredigt auf dem Hintergrund der spätjüdisch-hellenistischen Missionsliteratur' (Europaische Hochschulschriften, 33-33, Berne 1971), 84-108; H. Conzelmann and P. Althaus, 'Auferstehung', RGG^3 I, 694-701; O. Cullmann, *Christologie;* and *Heil als Geschichte* (Tübingen 1965), Chr. Duquoc, *Christologie,* vol. 2, *Le Messie* (Paris 1972); H. Elert, 'Die Krise der Osterglaubens', *Hochland* 60 (1967-1968), 305-318; A. Grabner-Haider, 'Auferstehungsleiblichkeit. Biblische Bemerkungen', StdZ 93 (1968), 217-222, and 'Leibliche Auferstehung', *Diakonia* 3 (1968), 121-122; H. Grasz, *Ostergeschehen und Osterbericht* (Göttingen 1964^3); W. Grossouw, *La glorification du Christ dans le quatrième évangile* (RechBibl), Bruges 1958, 131-145; E. Jüngel, *Unterwegs zur Sache* (Munich 1972); G. Kegel, *Auferstehung Jesu, Auferstehung der Toten* (Gütersloh 1970); W. Kramer, *Christos, Kyrios, Gottessohn* (AThANT, 44) (Zürich, Stuttgart 1963); J. Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Christi* (Stuttgart 1966); G.W. Lampe and D.M. McKinnon, *The resurrection: a dialogue* (London 1966); X. Léon-Dufour, *Résurrection de Jésus et message pascal* (Paris 1971); G. Lohfink, 'Die Auferstehung Jesu und die historische kritik', BuL 9 (1968), 37-57; W. Marxsen, *Die Auferstehung Jesu als historisches und theologisches Problem* (Gütersloh 1967^5) and *Die Auferstehung von Jesus von Nazareth* (Gütersloh 1968); Br.O. McDermott, *The personal unity of Jesus and God according to W. Pannenberg* (St Ottilien 1973); A. Moore, *The parousia in the New Testament* (NovTSuppl, 13) (Leyden 1966); Fr. Muszner, *Die Auferstehung Jesu* (Munich 1969); W. Pannenberg, *Grundzüge der Christologie* [516]

[517] (Gütersloh (1964, 1969[3]); 'Die Offenbarung Gottes in Jesus von Nazareth', *Neuland in der Theologie,* pt. 3, *Theologie als Geschichte* (Zürich, Stuttgart 1957), 135-169 and 285-351, and 'Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu', KuD 14 (1968), 105-118; R. Pesch, 'Heilszukunft und Zukunft des Heils', *Gestalt und Anspruch des Neuen Testaments,* ed. G. Schreiner (Würzburg 1969), 313-329; N. Pittenger, *Christology reconsidered* (London 1970); K. Rahner and W. Thüsing, *Christologie, systematisch und exegetisch* (Freiburg 1972); K. H. Rengstorf, *Die Auferstehung Jesu* (Witten 1960[4]); B. Rigaux, *Dieu l'a ressuscité* (Gembloux 1973); J. M. Robinson, *Kerygma und historischer Jesus* (Stuttgart 1967[2]); J. Rohde, *Die Redaktionsgeschichtliche Methode* (Hamburg 1966), especially 44-194; H. Schlier, *Ueber die Auferstehung Jesu Christi* (Einsiedeln 1968); H. R. Schlette, *Epiphanie als Geschichte* (Munich 1966); J. Sint, 'Die Auferstehung Jesu in der Verkündigung der Urgemeinde', ZKTh 84 (1962), 129-151; H. Schwantes, *Schöpfung der Endzeit. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Auferweckung bei Paulus* (Stuttgart 1963); W. Thüsing, *Erhöhungsvorstellung und Parusieerwartung der ältesten nachösterlichen Christologie,* BZ 11 (1967), 95-108 and 205-222, and 12 (1968), 54-80 and 223-240 (now also in book form: SBS 42, Stuttgart 1969); Rob. C. Ware, 'De interpretatie van de verrijzenis: een zaak van leven en dood', TvT 9 (1969), 55-78; H. Weber, *Die Lehre von der Auferstehung in den Haupttraktaten der scholastischen Theologie* (Freib. Theol. Stud., 91) (Freiburg 1973); U. Wilckens, *Auferstehung. Das biblische Auferstehungszeugnis historisch untersucbt und erklärt* (Berlin, Stuttgart 1970); J. H. Wilson, 'The Corinthians who say there is no resurrection of the dead', ZNW 59 (1968), 90-107. Works by further authors: W. Marxsen, U. Wilckens, G. Delling, H. Geyer, *Die Bedeutung der Auferstehungsbotschaft fur den Glauben an Jesus Christus* (Gütersloh 1966) (cit. *Auferstehungsbotschaft); Christ, faith, history;* B. Klappert (ed.), *Diskussion um Kreuz und Auferstehung* (Wuppertal 1967[2]).

Chapter 1

'RAISED FROM THE DEAD'

In contrast to some apocryphal books, the gospels say nothing about the resurrection as such; they speak of the dead Jesus only in terms of personal religious experiences, in which they discern the hand of the living Lord. To express this in words the disciples made use of familiar concepts: exaltation; assumption of the righteous one into heaven; resurrection and so forth. [518]

§1 Late Jewish ideas about life after death

Jewish belief in life after death was by no means uniform in Jesus' day. What is more, the contrast between the Jewish resurrection and Judaeo-Greek immortality, accepted more or less unanimously since O. Cullmann, does not correspond with historically documented evidence;[1] nor is it historically justifiable to regard the resurrection simply as an apocalyptic conviction.

According to the Book of Wisdom (Wis. 1-6) the righteous or wise one does not actually die (Wis. 5:15; 1:15, 1:4-14). The unrighteous man or sinner dies; his death is 'unto death' (1:12; 5:9-14), whereas that of the righteous is 'unto life' (1:15; 5:15). The hermeneutic horizon of this view is a conviction that God will vindicate the righteous who are persecuted for religious reasons (2:12-20; 4:18c- 5:14). The wise or righteous man 'taken up to God' will then be judge or

[1] O. Cullmann, *Immortalité de l'âme ou résurrection des morts?* (Neuchâtel-Paris 1956). For late Jewish ideas about life after death see in particular: H. Bardtke,'Der Erweckungsgedanke in der exilisch-nachexilischen Literatur des Alten Testaments', in *Von Ugarit nach Qumran* (Festschrift for O. Eissfeldt) (Berlin 1961), 9-24; G. Friedrich, 'Die Auferweckung Jesu, eine Tat Gottes oder ein Interpretament der Jünger', in KuD 17 (1971), 170-179; M.Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (Tübingen 1973[2]), especially 357-369; P. Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus* (Münster 1966); R. Martin-Achard, *De la mort à la résurrection d'après l'Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel-Paris 1956); G. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, immortality and eternal life* (Harvard, Cambridge 1972); J. Nelis, 'Het geloof in de verrijzenis in het oude testament', in TvT 10 (1970), 362-381; J. van der Ploeg, 'The belief in immortality in the writings of Qumrân', in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 18 (1961), 118-124; K. Schubert, 'Die Entwicklung der Auferstehunglehre von der nachexilischen bis zur frührabbinischen Zeit', in BZ 6 (1962), 177-214; Strack-Billerbeck, IV, 1166-1198; and II, 265-269; Kr. Stendahl (ed.), *Immortality and resurrection* (New York 1965); P. Volz, *Die Eschatologie des jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Tübingen 1934).

prosecutor of those who persecuted him; these anticipate their own sentence (4:18c-5:14).[2] This echoes ancient wisdom stories in which the righteous, having been persecuted, eventually occupy a high position at the royal court and are appointed judge over their former persecutors (typical example: Joseph in Egypt). Later the wise man was seen as one who obeyed God's law and suffered persecution on that account. God then acted as the avenger; and
[519] the persecuted individual is taken up into the court of heaven, where he is assigned the ad hoc task of judging his persecutors; then follows the acclamation. One had to confess: 'Truly, this was a righteous man' (a 'son of God'). This is the context of Wis. 2:12-20 and 5:1-7: the suffering righteous man is taken up into heaven and vindicated in the celestial court of judgment: just to see the righteous one exalted is in itself a punishment for the malefactors (Wis. 5:1-2 and 5:3-8). Seeing the exalted one in the ranks of the sons of God (2:13,16,18), the celestial court of angels, makes his former enemies acclaim his newly attained royal dignity. Hence in the Solomonic sapiential literature the exaltation of the suffering righteous one signifies promotion to royal status; the suffering and persecuted righteous man will judge peoples and nations (3:7-8; 4:16). Of course, the exalted one only passes an ad hoc judgment; it is not a universal judgment but the righteous one's judgment of his persecutors.

In this respect Wis. 1-6 is influenced by Is. 52-53 (the suffering *Ebed Yahweh).* In both, the suffering righteous one is *pais Kyriou* (the child of the Lord).[3] The parallel construction is striking (Wis. 5:1a and Is. 52:13; Wis. 5:1bc and Is. 52:15; Wis. 5:3-8 and Is. 53:1-6). The *Ebed*, too, hopes to be vindicated by God (Is. 50:7-9) − and vindicated judicially, since his suffering and death were apparently the result of a legal process (Is. 53:8). The exaltation of the *Ebed* prophet (Is. 52:13 and 53:12), although less explicit, is royal elevation as (a kind of) grand vizier. This likewise entails a judgment on former persecutors (Is. 53:1-6); they realize that their judgment was false. Again the scene ends with elevation and acclamation.

Neither of these accounts mention resurrection, only 'being taken up into heaven' after death. Sin leads to death (Wis. 1:12); the righteous man is 'immortal' (1:15). The godless perceive life and death (see the discussion in Wis. 2:1-5) as this-worldly; there is no reward or punishment after death; it all happens here on earth (2:6-11). However (in light of the wise one or servant of God) they are obliged to amend their appraisal (4:20-5:14; especially 5:9-14): there is life after death, but sinners have no part in it. According to the Book of

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[2] L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende gerechte?,* 54-55 and 69; Kl. Berger, 'Die königlichen Messiastraditionen des Neuen Testaments', in NTS 20 (1973-1974), 1-45; G. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* l.c., 48-70.

[3] According to Ruppert, Wisdom is an 'updated' version or elaboration of Is. 52-53; see also Nickelsburg, l.c., 62-66. The two works (Ruppert and Nickelsburg) were written independently of each other.

Wisdom, then, immortality is a state of the righteous: their requital, vindication and elevation. Conversely, their persecutors, despite the earthly success of their legal conspiracy against them, are punished after their death.[4]

Form criticism reveals a similar thematic pattern or schema **as** in Is. 52-53 [520] and Wis. 4:20ff in Enoch 62-63: the righteous one[5] (here called the son of man) is raised to the (ad hoc) status of heavenly judge. Both Wisdom and Enoch are interpretations of the deutero-Isaiahan *Ebed Yahweh,* although in Enoch the righteous one or son of man is not suffering or persecuted; the connection is that in all three cases a 'celestial figure' ultimately acts as judge. For that matter, the 'son of man' in Dan. 7 (see above) is also the heavenly *archon* or guardian angel of the now suffering Israel, so that even in this Danielic tradition the discrepancy between 'suffering' and 'son of man' is not as great as is commonly supposed. Besides, the installation of this *archon* in heaven is a celestial prefiguration of the 'lifting up' of Israel; Israel's enemies will be punished. In other words, form critically Dan. 7 has the same theme as Enoch, Wisdom and the *Ebed Yahweh* songs. The deutero-Isaiahan tradition of the exaltation and that of the heavenly figure, the son of man, have merged.

Between the *Ebed Yahweh* and the period of persecution under Antiochus IV, the persecution of Israel's religious leaders prompted an interpretation of Is. 52-53 which centred on the elevation of the persecuted after death and the punishment of their tormentors. This gave rise to a tradition with a standard theme, based on the *Ebed* song (also partly on material in Is. 13 and 14).[6] Each time it refers to being taken up to heaven rather than resurrection.

This becomes a general theme (i.e. separate from the idea of persecution) in *Assumptio Moysis* 10 and in Enoch 104: the righteous are all taken up into heaven, where they shine as stars in the firmament,[7] without any mention of installation in a specific authoritative office. After death the righteous are in heaven.

Dan. 12:1-3 has the same theme using the concept of 'resurrection', for some Jews to eternal life, for others to eternal ignominy. This is the oldest evidence of belief in resurrection in Israel. At the close of the age Michael, Israel's *archon* or guardian angel, will 'stand up', apparently in a heavenly court of law comprising angels: a session with an accuser ('satan') and a defender. In this court Michael represents Israel's righteous ones in their conflict with the Seleucid king (Dan. 10:13-21). It concerns the final struggle between Michael and Lucifer (the celestial *archon* behind the anti-Israelite Antiochus) in the form [521] of a divine judgment. To this end − that is, so that they may be judged − the

[4] Nickelsburg, *Résurrection,* 68.
[5] Nickelsburg. l.c., 70-78.
[6] Nickelsburg, l.c., 81-82.
[7] For this see in particular M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (Tübingen 1973²), 358-359; Nickelsburg, l.c, 82-87.

dead are raised. Those who were put to death unjustly are restored to life, because it was taken from them wrongly: *their* resurrection is an act of divine justice. Daniel 12:2a is clearly reminiscent of Is. 26:19: the context is Israel's national restoration, represented in Isaiah by the image of resurrection from the dead. In these circles the many pious ones or Chasidim who fell victim to the persecution constituted a theological problem: they died because of their obedience to the Torah (1 Macc. 1:50,60-61,62-63; 2 Macc. 6-7). Their piety caused their death, whereas the Hellenizing Jews, the disobedient ones, remained alive. According to Jewish notions of reward and retribution this was problematic. Resurrection and punishment were the only possible answer, and it was couched in terms borrowed from Is. 26. But for Daniel, as opposed to Isaiah, resurrection is not a saving event; it is simply the means of subjecting the dead − good and bad − as living beings to God's judgment, rewarding and punishing Jews in accordance with their behaviour during the persecution. In this context resurrection is solely for the purpose of judgment, not an event that brings salvation; besides, it is not a general but simply an ad hoc resurrection; the actual judgment is the restoration of Israel, in which those resurrected to life will share. Daniel 12:3 identifies the 'wise' with 'servants' (*Ebed* in the plural; cf. Is. 52:13 with Dan. 12:3). Resurrection is assumption into heaven (Dan. 12:3).

The Book of Jubilees 23:27-31 reflects on the same events as Daniel; the solution is on the same lines as the somewhat later Daniel, but there is no question of resurrection: while the bones of the righteous rest in the earth, their souls are taken up into heaven. The only mention is of a 'rising' of the soul: Enoch 102 -104 also speaks of resurrection of the souls of the righteous, but in a wider context; undeserved suffering (not so much death as such), even when it is not for God's cause, calls for requital, namely that the souls of these righteous ones be taken up into heaven. At death the souls of the righteous go to Sheol (Enoch 102:5), and at the judgment they are taken up to heaven; the unrighteous, on the other hand, stay in Sheol. In 4 Macc. the death of the righteous is simply a passage to 'immortality' (4 Macc. 7:3; 9:22; 14:5-6; 16:13; 17:12), 'eternal life' (15:3), or immediate assumption into heaven (9:22; 13:17; 16:25; 17:18-19). In Qumrân, too, resurrection appears to be unknown; there is
[522] talk of eternal life, but it is already realized on earth.[8] When immortality is mentioned it does not mean natural immortality as an attribute of the human spirit (not in the Book of Wisdom either): it is God's reward for the righteous. Only if God's Spirit dwells in a man is he immortal (Wis. 1:4-7). There is no intrinsic link between 'soul' and 'immortality', as there is between 'fellowship with God' and 'immortality' or assumption into heaven. Thus among these

[8] Especially Nickelsburg, l.c., 144-169.

Greek-speaking Jews the Greek concept of immortality is fully assimilated to the Jewish view: it is a matter of life or death in a *Jewish* sense, not a 'philosophic' deathlessness.

Late Jewish literature sometimes refers to an interim stage (Enoch 22; 4 Ezra 7): the righteous are already 'in paradise' before the end of time; by then the earlier 'phantom existence' in Sheol was obsolete.

Physical resurrection is also mentioned in 2 Macc. 7 as a form of divine reparation for death by martyrdom (more in line with the *Ebed* tradition than that of Dan. 12:1-3). In 2 Baruch 49-51 the dead are to rise in their former bodily state, so that the living may see that the *dead* have been resurrected. Only after this recognition will the judgment take place (50:4); the righteous will shine as stars in the firmament. The *Testamentum Judae,* too, refers to a bodily resurrection. In the *Psalmi Salomonis* (mid-1st century B.C.), most probably deriving from Pharisaic circles, God's judgment is a central theme: reward and punishment (Ps. Sal. 2:3-18; 8:7-26; 2:22-31; 3:13-15), that is, life or destruction (*apôleia*). *Psalmi Salomonis* 3 is plainly concerned with recompense after death: eternal life or eternal death. Here eternal life does not relate to undeserved suffering or death: it is God's reward for a pious life. For sinners death is final without further (eschatological or new) confirmation. These psalms do not explicitly mention a resurrection of either the body or the soul: the categories are eternal life, whereas the death of sinners means death plain and simple. We have now examined four Judaic categories expressing the notion of post-terrestrial life: assumption into heaven (without further specification), resurrection of the body, removal of the soul from Sheol, and eternal life.

4 Ezra 7:32 (1st century A.D.) also speaks of the release of the dead from Sheol in a universal sense (universal resurrection), so that all may be judged: rewarded with paradise or punished with Gehenna (7:33-37). *Oracula Sybyllina* [523]
4 tells of a world conflagration; everything will be destroyed, people and things; then God will cause all human beings to rise from the dead in their former state, followed by the general judgment; sinners will return 'beneath the earth' (Gehenna), the good will live happily on earth (the same universal resurrection is found in *Testamentum Benjamin* 10). In other words, the two datable Jewish testimonies to a general resurrection come from the end of the first century A.D.[9]

We conclude this survey as follows. In Jesus' time there were no uniform ideas about life after death − a problem to which Israel had begun to pay attention no more than a century or two before Christ. Despite a gradual tendency over a century to speak of the assumption of the persecuted into heaven, followed by that of all pious and righteous Jews, in terms of bodily

[9] Nickelsburg, l.c., 143.

resurrection, all kinds of other ideas were in circulation: either of the soul's assumption into heaven (in the case of the righteous) or of eternal life (amplified either with bodily resurrection or assumption of the soul into heaven, whether immediately after death or from Sheol). Originally resurrection was exceptional and was associated with God's recompense to faithful observers of the Law who had been unjustly put to death during the Antiochene persecution; later it became associated with unrighteous suffering in general; and finally with pious and righteous life as such. In this last form the prospect eventually opened up of a general resurrection, which even then was not so much a salvific event in its own right as an indispensable condition for ensuring that everyone would appear at the judgment.[10] In New Testament times the general resurrection would seem to have been more especially a dogma of the Pharisees, although they were not nearly so representative prior to A.D. 70 as they were after the Jewish War. We can assume, therefore, that particularly after A.D. 70 the notion of physical resurrection was a fairly widespread popular Jewish belief. Before that there was certainly the expectation that specific individuals would be resurrected, who would then return to earth (see Mk. 6:14) to perform a particular salvific task; but these are not instances of an 'eschatological' resurrection.

§2 It was God who raised him 'from the dead'

The difference between the New Testament and late Jewish ideas about
[524] resurrection is immediately apparent. Jesus' resurrection is a saving event per se, not a prerequisite for appearing alive before God's throne to be judged. His resurrection is interpreted directly as God's 'amen' to the person of Jesus. Even in the older, non-apocalyptic books of the Old Testament we hear of a resurrection that is a salvific event, but then in a spiritual sense (the 'resurrection of the people of Israel', Is. 26:19; 25:8). The idea of Jesus' bodily resurrection is more akin to that than to the apocalyptic, neutral concept of resurrection. 'Resurrection' is God's eschatological, saving act, accomplished in Jesus.

There is also a terminological distinction. The late Jewish general resurrection is technically known as a 'resurrection *of* the dead' (*anastasis nekrôn*); Jesus' resurrection, on the other hand, is almost invariably referred to as being *'from* the dead' (*ek nekrôn*).[11] Yet this raises several problems. With the exception of Revelation, James, Jude and 2 Peter (see also Rom. 1:4), the New Testament always refers to Jesus' resurrection as a 'rising *from* the dead',

[10] Dan 12:2; Ethiop. Enoch 50:7, 62:15,22,37-71; 4 Ezra 7:29ff; Syr. Apoc. Baruch 30:1-5, 50:2-51:3.
[11] B. van Iersel, 'The resurrection of Jesus' in Conc 6 (1970), n 10, 54-67; P. Hoffmann, *Die Toten in Christus,* 180-185.

whereas this formula is scarcely known outside the New Testament literature.[12] The Septuagint usually speaks of rising 'from death' (*ek thanatou*).[13] But the formula 'from the dead' is not unknown even in the Old Testament.[14] In the New Testament, it is true, a verb used in connection with 'from the dead' almost always relates to Jesus' resurrection, whereas the general resurrection is regularly described as *anastasis nekrôn,* resurrection of the dead.[15] Yet it is worth noting that according to Bauer's lexicon the term *anastasis nekrôn* (resurrection of the dead), as a substantive, derived from the verbal phrase *anastènai ek nekrôn* (to rise *from* the dead). According to G. Kegel[16] the unqualified formulations − 'he is risen', and so forth − are therefore older than the formula, 'risen from the dead'; the latter is said to have arisen during the controversy with the Jews about Jesus' death. It goes without saying that terms like 'rising', 'raising up' − familiar words from everyday vocabulary − have diverse meanings, so they need additional qualification to clarify the intended meaning: 'awakened from the dead' or 'having died and risen', that is: 'dead *but* risen'.

Nevertheless the verb (to rise) used with 'from the dead' and the substantive 'resurrection *of* the dead' reveal a peculiarity of the New Testament; for the substantive, '*the* resurrection', is seldom used in connection with Jesus.[17] In my view the remarkable frequency in the New Testament of *ek nekrôn* − *from* the dead − is not a distinctively New Testament phenomenon, but merely the consequence of what is indeed distinctive: the almost exclusive use of a verb to express Jesus' resurrection, suggesting activity, dynamism. More typical is the [525]

[12] Even so, in the new edition of Bauer's *Wörterbuch* several instances are mentioned, 138-139.

[13] Eccles. 48:5; Est. 4:8; Job 5:20; Prov. 10:2; 23:14, etc

[14] Judges 16:14,20; Gen. 28:16; Deut. 18:5. See Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 204; Delorme, in *lectio devina*, n. 72, 114-119, 124-125; C. Perrot, 'La descente du Christ aux enfers dans le Nouveau Testament', in LVie 87 (1968), 5-29; E. Fascher, 'Anastasis, Resurrectio, Auferstehung', in ZNW 40 (1941), 166-229; H. Oepke, in ThWNT, I, 368-72; II, 332-337; R. Schnackenburg, 'Zur Aussageweise "Jesus (von den Toten) auferstanden" ', in BZ 13 (1969), 10f; U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden,* l.c., 137-145; H. Braun, 'Zur Terminologie der Acta von der Auferstehung', in ThLZ 77 (1952), 533-536.

[15] *'Egeirein ek nekrôn':* only of Jesus in the New Testament (Rom. 4:24; 8:11; 10:9; Gal 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:10; see Eph. 1:20; Col. 1:12); *'Egeiresthai ek nekrôn':* likewise only of Jesus (Rom. 6:4,9; 7:4; 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:12,20 *(anagein ek nekrôn* was already an old Septuagintal formula: 1 Cor. 2:26; 28:8,11; Tob. 13:2; Wis. 16:13; Ps. 29:3); *'anastasis nekrôn',* generally used in the New Testament for the general resurrection, is applied once to Christ (Rom. 1:4), whereas the general resurrection of the dead is twice called *'anastasis hè ek nekrôn'* (Lk. 20:35 and Acts 4:2). See Hoffmann, l.c., 182; Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 72, 114, n. 10; Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden,* 137-145. According to the admittedly plausible thesis of G. Kegel, *Auferstehung Jesu. Auferstehung der Toten* (Gütersloh 1970), the New Testament spoke initially of Jesus' resurrection *within* the horizon set by the Jewish expectation of the general resurrection, whereas later (Luke's gospel and Acts mark the turning point) the relationship is reversed: beginning with Jesus' resurrection, an attempt is made to render the general resurrection intelligible to Greeks. The core of this fundamental change seems to me difficult to deny in respect of the New Testament.

[16] G. Kegel, *Auferstehung Jesus,* 24.

[17] *'Anastasis nekrôn'* (Rom. 1:4); *'anastasis'* (Phil. 3:10), *'exanastasis'* (Phil. 3:11), and *'egersis'* (Mt. 27:53).

marked avoidance of the substantive in connection with Jesus' resurrection. God's saving act in raising Jesus from the dead is not amenable to substantification. This indicates the profession of Christian belief not so much in the resurrection of Jesus Christ but in the fact that Jesus is risen or, more accurately, that God caused him to rise from the dead. The constant use of '*from* the dead' is the (grammatical) consequence.

More important than this grammatical dissection is the fact that all early texts say it is God who raised Jesus from the dead.[18] The emphasis is on God's saving act in Jesus of Nazareth.

Of course, there are passages that read that Jesus himself rose from the dead.[19] Very often the meaning is still that Jesus rose (from the dead) through the power of him who raised him up. In part this formula would seem to be the normal result of a grammatical construction: 'Jesus died, was buried, was raised (i.e. rose).' That is, whenever death and resurrection have the same subject, it follows grammatically that the subject remains unchanged (except in the contrast: 'You killed him but God has awakened him'). The affirmation of the resurrection by itself is probably earlier (1 Thess. 1:10) and then it is always phrased as 'God has awakened him', or 'he has been awakened (raised)'. On the other hand it should be noted that the son of man tradition tells us that Jesus himself rises, apparently in his own strength (Mk. 8:31: *anastènai*; 9:31 and 10:34: *anastèsetai*; here the terminology implies rising rather than being raised). Thus there seems to have been a tradition in early Christianity − the son of man tradition − which speaks quite clearly of Jesus rising. This tradition is evident only in Jn. 10:17-18, where Jesus takes his life back on his own authority; somewhat later Ignatius of Antioch spelled this out emphatically,[20] and the formula became classical in Christianity from the 2nd century onwards. In early Christianity up to and including the New Testament, however, the emphasis was largely on God's saving act in raising Jesus from the dead. For the Christians *ho egeiras* − 'God, who awakens to life' − became as it were a divine attribute,[21] that is, a way of extolling God.

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[18] The *'egeirein':* Rom. 10:9 (a pre-Pauline confession); Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30,37 (all places where traditional *kerygma* is discernible); 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 4:24; 1 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:15; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:21; with *'anistanai':* Acts 2:24,32; 13:34; 1 Thess. 4:14, too, should be translated thus (not: 'risen', but 'raised', 'resuscitated'). Therefore God's action can also be expressed in the passive voice: 'Jesus has been raised' (that is, by God): Mk. 14:28 par. Mt. 28:7; Mk. 16:6,14; Mt. 16:21 and Lk. 9:22; Mt. 17:23; 20:19; 27:63-64; Lk. 24:34; Jn. 2:22; 21:14; Rom. 4:25; 6:4,9; 7:4; 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:4; 15:12-13,14,16,17,20; 2 Cor. 5:15; 2 Tim. 2:8. The passive form is not to be found in Acts, which has a clear preference for the active voice: God caused him to rise *(egeirein),* even so that *'anistanai',* as focused on Jesus (and coming from the tradition), is nevertheless understood by Luke as a 'raising up', not as a 'rising' (cf. Lk. 24:7 and 24:34; Acts 10:41 with 10:40; Acts 17:3 with 17:1; especially Acts 13:23 and 13:34 with 13:30 and 13:37).

[19] Mk. 16:6; Mt. 27:64; 28:6,7; Lk. 24:6,34; Rom. 4:25; 6:4; 1 Cor. 15: 3-5; Rom. 6:9; 7:4; 8:34; Jn. 21:14.

[20] *Anestesen beauton* (Ignatius, *ad Smyrn.,* 2).

[21] Rom. 4:24; 8:11; 2 Cor. 4:14; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:21. In the second blessing of the

§3 'The third day he rose again according to the Scriptures': Jesus' resurrection as a conclusive eschatological event [526]

Literature. J. Blank, *Paulus und Jesus* (Munich 1968), 133-197; J. Dupont, 'Ressuscité "Ie troisième jour'", Bibl 40 (1959), 742-761; F. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 197-211; K. Lehmann, *Atiferweckt am dritten Tag nach der Schrift* (Freiburg 1968); F. Mildenberger, 'Auferstanden am dritten Tag nach den Schriften', EvTh 23 (1963), 265-280; F. Nötscher, 'Zur Auferstehung nach drei Tagen', Bibl 35 (1954) 313-319; H. Tödt, *Der Menschensohn,* l.c., 167-172; N. Walker, 'After three days', NovT 4 (1960), 261-262; J. Wijngaards, 'Death and resurrection in covenantal context', VT 17 (1967), 226-239.

The term 'scriptural proof'[22] does not render exactly what the first Christians felt and experienced when they described the salvation encountered in and through Jesus as 'according to the Scriptures'. For them Scripture was really the book of God's magnificent acts and promises, the expression of his will and plan of salvation. To begin with, Scripture was not what it was to become later − the Old Testament; it was their living Scripture, in light of which the first Christians 'read' or interpreted new historical events and experiences. Ordinary faithful Jews were in no sense scriptural scholars; but their lives were governed by the psalms and scriptures that were regularly read aloud and expounded in synagogue services. In the earliest commemoration of their master's passion, still recognizable in Mark's passion narrative, we see how the first Christians identified with the meditative prayer of the psalmists who, in supreme humiliation, continued to put their trust in God. At first those Christians did not know what to make of Jesus' suffering and death; so great, however, was their faith in God that they had more confidence in him than in what the painful, concretely historical facts stated unequivocally. Religious insight may have taken time to dawn, but in the end they knew: through their official organs men might condemn this righteous one, but he is not forsaken by God. That was the spiritual tenor of their Scriptures. Against the background of that spirituality, which informed Jesus' own life, they tried to place what happened to Jesus. Jesus was a Jew; his close friends and disciples [527]

Jewish prayer *'Schmone Esre',* too, there is a eulogy 'to God who makes the dead alive' *(mechayye hammatim);* it is a prayer which from the time of Gamaliel II the Jews were obliged to pray three times a day; based on older traditions, this second blessing was formulated only around A.D. 100 and in all likelihood it does not expressly refer to resurrection from the dead but to the Old Testament assertion: 'with God everything is possible'.

[22] See e.g., C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London 1961); E. Flesseman-van Leer, in *Zur Bedeutung des Todes Jesu,* l.c., 79-96; E. Fuchs, *Hermeneutik* (Bad Cannstadt 1958[2]), 21-210; P. Grelot, *Sens chrétien de l'Ancien Testament* (Paris 1962); A. Suhl, *Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen im Mk.-Evangelium* (Gütersloh 1965); C. Westermann, 'Die Prophetenzitate in den neutestamentlichen Reden von der Zukunft', in EvTh 27 (1967). 307-3I7.

also thought like faithful Jews. They interpreted Jesus in Jewish terms. Both the uniqueness of what they had experienced in Jesus and the Judaic experiential framework in which they articulated their experiences constituted a single tradition history, in which the present seen in light of their Jewish past and their past understood in light of the Jewish man Jesus constituted a single event. Thus the new thing that had been accomplished in Jesus was made intelligible and expressible in Old Testament and Judaic religious categories, legacy of centuries of Jewish experience of God's will expressed in their sacred writings.

In the credal affirmation 'He is risen' the determining factor is their recollection of Jesus' days on earth and their experience of salvation through conversion; but to express this reality in words the whole tradition of Judaic religious experience was almost as important. Despite and because of the fact that what was utterly new about Jesus of Nazareth could not be pigeon-holed, they were able to make sense of Jesus' newness only via age-old familiar, tried and tested Judaic experiential models.

The salvific character of the resurrection in a non-apocalyptic, New Testament sense is reinforced by the addition that he rose on the third day, and moreover 'the third day according to the Scriptures'. The combination of the third day with the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:4b) also features in a manifest reflection in Mt. 12:40 (the three days of Jonah: Jon. 2:1), more vaguely in Lk. 24:46, and in connection with a temple logion also in Jn. 2:22; minus the reference to Scripture but, as in 1 Cor. 15:4b, again in a credal context in Acts 10:40. Apart from the two statements affirming resurrection on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4b; Acts 10:40) there are sixteen instances where the three-day schema is firmly linked to one of three tradition complexes: the temple logion, predictions of the passion, and the prediction of a consummation (rise again on the third day; rebuild the temple on the third day; fulfilment on the third day).[23]

The fact that Luke and Matthew change 'after three days' into '(on) the third day'(Mt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Lk. 9:22; 18:33; see Lk. 24:7,46) indicates that historically the 'after three days' in the 'predictions of the passion' tradition was linked with the 'on the third day' in the resurrection tradition. Thus the phrase 'on the third day' eventually prevailed.

[528] It is significant that outside the credal formulae and these prediction stories the 'third day' motif is totally absent from the gospel narratives about Easter and the appearances. All of them refer to 'on the first day of the week'.[24] That day is not the third day after Good Friday but the day after the sabbath,[25] and

[23] Mk. 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; 14:58; 15:29; Mt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 12:38-42; 26:61; 27:40; Lk. 9:22; 18:33; 11:29-32; 13:31-33; Jn. 18:19.

[24] Mk. 16:2; Mt. 18:1ff; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:1,19. Or again: 'eight days later', the next first day of the week (Lk. 24:30-31; Jn. 20:26).

[25] Strack-Billerbeck, I, 1052-1054.

has nothing to do with the 'three day' motif. What we find in Luke and John is a historicizing tendency designed to show that Christ manifested his presence on that (Jewish) first day of the week − what has since become the Christian Sunday. But even in Luke (and Mark) the rising on the third day is not directly associated with the chronological events of the Easter story; the expression occurs only in citations of Jesus' earlier predictions (Lk. 24:7 and 24:46; Lk. 24:21 may have a more general meaning; see below). Thus the various tradition complexes clearly distinguish between the 'first day of the week' (Easter and appearance narratives) and the 'third day' (credal formulae and predictions).

The 'third day' formula antedates Paul: 'He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:4b) is a *quotation* by Paul. F. Hahn, who dates this historically,[26] argues that the formula breaks down into two originally independent, component formulae: 'He was raised according to the Scriptures' and 'He was raised on the third day'. As a result of the amalgamation, 'the third day' is said to be part of a scriptural proof text, so one had to find an Old Testament reference to a resurrection on the third day. That was problematic.[27] Yet some of the evidence − even for the complete formula (albeit emerging from what were originally two variants) − points to local Palestinian congregations or, if the formula is considered to have arisen in Antioch, then still to a very early stage of the Antiochene tradition. We have already said that the formula in 1 Cor. 15:4b displays both pre-Pauline and Pauline features.[28]

A first perspective is provided by the Jewish notion that a dead person is truly dead only 'after three days'. Rising on the third day could then imply that Jesus did not rise from a pseudo-death but that he was truly dead; in other words, 'on the third day' says in effect that he was dead and buried.[29] Yet people fail to ask why death is only certain on the third day. It indicates that 'the third day' or 'after three days' has special significance in the Jewish frame of reference, even in day-to-day life. Indeed, it is tantamount to the 'decisive [529] day', the critical day on which something is definitely concluded or something new begins. The same applies to death: after three days one knows for certain whether to abandon all hope or whether to expect a decisive new turn (Jn. 11:17-39). For three days men seek the lost Jesus; the third day brings the happy outcome (Lk. 2:46). Paul fasts for three days; then the *metanoia,* his con-

[26] *Hoheitstitel,* 197-211, 210.

[27] Furthermore, the gospels are fairly discordant: 'after three days', 'within three days', 'after three days and three nights', 'the third day'. Purely chronologically, this indeed refers to different days. See Mt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Lk. 9:22; 18:33; Mk. 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; 14:58; 15:29; Lk. 9:22; 18:33; 24:7,(21),46; Mt. 12:40; see Lk. 11:29-32; Mk. 8:11-12; Mt. 12:38-41; Mk. 14:58; Mt. 26:61; Mk. 15:29; Mt. 27:40; Jn. 2:13-22. These variations seem connected with problems in the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew text (see Gen. 42:17ff; Ex. 19:11-16; Esther 4:16-5:1; Hosea 6:2, LXX).

[28] See Part Two, Section Three, note 71.

[29] Thus Kegel, *Auferstehung Jesu,* 27.

version, is complete and he has himself baptized (Acts 9:9).[30] The third day, then, is decisive, the crucial turning point or the end.[31]

That is not all. The third day as a critical, decisive day is used without any chronological qualification in no less than thirty places in the Old Testament to indicate the day of important salvific events or of sudden, overwhelming calamity.[32] 'On the third day' Joseph releases his brothers from prison (Gen. 42:18); after three days of active waiting, on the third God makes a covenant with his people (Ex. 19:11, 16); on the third day David hears the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:2); on the third day the division of the kingdom into Israel and Judah is accomplished (1 Kings 12:12); on the third day king Hezekiah gives thanks to God after an illness thought to be mortal (2 Kings 20:5, 8); Esther begins her noble task of delivering Israel on the third day (Esther 5:1); on the third day Yahweh gives new life to his people and raises them up (Hos. 6:2-3).

After three days of often difficult, burdensome, fatal experience the third day brings deliverance: that is the basic meaning of the three-day motif. It boils down to an assurance of decisive victory. The third day is not, therefore, a focal point in time but in the context of salvation. In early Christianity Jesus' rising from the dead on the third day signified that God left his righteous one in dire distress for three days only; after the painful shock of his death came the news: the Lord is alive. Not death but God has the final word; that is, 'the third day' belongs to God. The resurrection of Christ indeed ushers in a radical turn in the disciples' temporal existence: it marks the day of salvation. A temporal expression − the third day − is most apposite to convey this. Through God's saving action in Jesus and at a given moment in history − 'the third day' − and
[530] in the disciples' existential renewal eschatological deliverance is ushered in,[33] but only 'after three days', that is, after Jesus' hour of supreme need: his passion and death. In contrast to a day of victory, 'three days' indicates brevity, the short term. Despite Abraham's despair when commanded to sacrifice Isaac, despite Jonah's desperate, lost situation (in the belly of the whale), despite the total humiliation and defeat of the people of Israel, each time, 'on the third day', God brings salvation and deliverance from calamity. But Isaac was not sacrificed, Jonah did not perish, and the nation was duly

[30] See also Mk. 8:2; Mt. 15:32; Lk. 24:21; Ex. 15:22; 2 Kings 2:17; 2 Chron. 20:25; Jonah 3:3, etc.

[31] To say nothing of still other meanings of 'after three days', specifically for an uncommonly brief period, for something which should really need much more time. The temple, which had taken forty-six years to build, Jesus will destroy in three days (in a minimum of time) and build it again (Jn. 2:13-22). See also Josh. 1:11; 2 Macc. 5:14; Hosea 6:2.

[32] See *Biblisch-Historisches Handwörterbuch* (eds. B. Reicke and L. Rost) (Göttingen 1962), I (W. Schmauch).

[33] The third day had nothing to do, therefore, with 'three days after Good Friday', on which the *triduum paschale* is based. This historicizing is correct and meaningful in the liturgy, but it should not lead us to forget the deeper salvific import of the decisive turning point.

delivered. Only Jesus 'was not spared' (see Rom. 8:32); yet his deliverance came, albeit after his death: 'the third day he rose again'.

Thus Hosea 6:2-3 is an apt, though by no means the only, scriptural reference: 'After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him'; on the morning of the third day the covenant is celebrated and renewed (Hosea 6: 2-3). Of course, one could object that no New Testament reflection indicates that the third day is understood in the Hosean sense (in fact, the passage is not cited at all).

However, the targums and midrashes which speak of the universal resurrection on the third day do confirm this and actually include a reference to Hosea 6:2-3. These Jewish commentaries are of a recent date (2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.); but like the rabbinic texts they derive from much older traditions.[34] The fact that these Jewish commentaries on Scripture, while – unlike the scriptural references in the New Testament − not based on what had already been realized in Jesus Christ still interpret past events (as recorded in Scripture) in the perspective of the coming general resurrection on the third day,[35] shows that we should not to regard the New Testament's exposition of Scripture as evidence *pour les besoins de la cause*. In virtue of its own experiences, read in light of its sacred books, Israel itself arrived at **a** salvific notion of a *future* resurrection on the third day. So, on the basis of their own experiences with Jesus, the first Christians became convinced of a resurrection on the third day − but one already realized in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Although the resurrection on the third day is also a Jewish idea, and by Jesus' time probably a familiar one, the newness of the Christian view is that this third day was not going to happen 'three days after the world's end' [531] (according to the targums), but had already happened in Jesus the Christ. Besides, the combination of the third day with 'according to the Scriptures' implies that Jesus' resurrection is not only a fundamental, unique salvific event, but is expressly proclaimed as a definitive, eschatological saving fact. If the Jewish idea of the resurrection on the third day was already familiar in Jesus' time, the Christian affirmation 'on the third day he rose again' signifies

[34] In cave XI at Qumran was found a Job targum in Palestinian Aramaic, 'more or less in the language which Jesus spoke' (A.S. van der Woude, 'Das Hiobtargum aus Qumran, Höhle XI, in VTS 1963 [322-351], 329). Thence arises the tendency among exegetes to assume rather more extensively the existence of written targums in Jesus' time. Now in those targums and midrashes we have an extant 'theology of the third day', especially apropos the sacrifice of Abraham. See in particular R. le Déaut, 'La nuit paschale. Essai sur la signification de la pâque juive à partir du Targum d'Exode XII' 42 (Anal. Bibl., 22) (Rome 1963); and 'La presentation targumique du sacrifice d'Isaac et la sotériologie paulienne' (Anal. Bibl., 17-18) (Rome 1963), II, 563-574. More and more we are coming to see clear affinities between certain Pauline and synoptic ideas and the Jewish targums, not least in connection with ideas about redemption.

[35] In the midrash Rabbah on Gen. 22:4 all events taking place 'on the third day' are brought together (H. Freedman-M. Simon, *Midrash Rabba,* I, London 1939, 491), including the eschatological resurrection with reference to Hosea 6:2 (Septuagint).

that this third day, the day of victory, was already realized in Jesus Christ as the basis for our eschatological resurrection. Thus his resurrection is hailed as the great turning point of all times, in accordance with God's plan of salvation ('according to the Scriptures').

Conclusion: When Christians affirm that Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day, they are affirming that God's reign has assumed the aspect of the risen crucified one, Jesus of Nazareth.

There is more to it. In some logia, the core of which many critics and exegetes attribute to Jesus, Jesus himself speaks of the 'third day' or day of victory, without relating it explicitly to his death or possible resurrection; that is, he speaks of a dire situation ('three days'), but at the same time expressing his sense that − somehow − 'the third day' is in God's hand. He mentions this in connection with the sly fox, Herod (Lk. 13:31-33), with the demolition and rebuilding of the temple (Mk. 14:58; Mt. 26:61). Many scholars, following Bultmann,[36] consider Mk. 14:58 in particular to be an authentic Jesus saying. According to these logia Jesus is aware that he can rely on God's 'third day' in every tribulation. In my view the authenticity of this logion would also explain why the 'third day' motif does not occur in the gospels' Easter, tomb and appearance traditions but only in the tradition complexes dealing with Jesus' predictions, as well as the credal formulae. Noteworthy, therefore, is John's comment on the temple logion: 'When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken' (Jn. 2:22). The third day is a scriptural term and a Jesus term. If the term 'the third day' (not specifically linked with death or resurrection) was used by Jesus, it expressed his self-understanding: his awareness of having to go through the depths of suffering, but in the firm conviction that, come what may, he was in God's mighty hand. For whatever
[532] happened, the 'third day' was in God's power. Jesus knew he was the suffering prophet who, one way or another, would be vindicated by God. He reckoned on renewed life − before, in or after his death:[37] a 'consummation on the third day' (Lk. 13:32). God will not leave his own in distress for longer than three days; in other words, the suffering of the righteous, their downfall, may be bitter, but the God of salvation will have the last word. By contrast the suffering is short-lived: a mere 'three days', hence transient. Thus the three-day motif perfectly accords with the tradition complex of the suffering righteous one. Mark 8:31 speaks of 'suffering many things' and 'after three days rising again'; here Mark takes over a kerygmatic formula; for 'after three days' (three days later) does not tally with his 'chronology' of the passion narrative. The

[36] *Tradition,* 19; W. Popkes, *Christus Traditus,* 232; C. Colpe, in ThWNT VIII, 447-8.
[37] L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende Gerechte?,* 63-4 and 75; K. Lehmann, *Am dritten Tag,* 236.

model is Ps. 34:19: *'Pollai hai thlipseis tôn dikaiôn'*: many are the afflictions of the righteous (see also 4 Macc. 18:15); but they are rescued from them by the living God: 'but the Lord delivers him out of them all' (Ps. 34:19; see Wis. 2:13-20 and 5:1-7). Jesus' growing awareness of his suffering and violent death may have been a catalyst for his self-understanding.[38]

For all these reasons the seemingly banal expression 'on the third day (he rose again)' is charged with immense salvific implications. It tells us nothing about a chronological dating of the resurrection as an event (e.g. three days after Good Friday) or even of the Easter appearances; but it says everything about God's eschatological, definitive, saving action regarding the crucified Jesus; his resurrection is an eschatological reality that breaks through the apocalyptic concept of resurrection. The third day, the day of salvation, is already a living reality and unfolds in our history, which continues as usual (no apocalyptic 'end of time'), a radical newness and a hopeful future.

[38] According to Ruppert, l.c., 71, this way of envisaging suffering (his passion) must have been the matrix of Jesus' self-understanding as the 'suffering *son of man'*. I am not at all convinced of that; it says in precise detail what Jesus (nonetheless sure that God has the final word) leaves open, in reliance on God's future.

Chapter 2

RESURRECTION, EXALTATION, SENDING OF THE SPIRIT. THE PAROUSIA

The resurrection and exaltation or empowerment of Jesus are key concepts in the New Testament. But what is the relation between resurrection and exaltation? [533]

Here we return to a question from Part Two (Section Three, chapter 3, §4): the ambiguity of the term 'Easter experience'. The foregoing summary of late Jewish ideas about life after death showed that there were no uniform expectations in this regard in Jesus' time. Although belief in life after death as a divine reward for the righteous was general, a premature and above all violent death was often interpreted as a punishment from God. 'Eternal life' could also be expressed in diverse categories, among which resurrection was only one possibility.

In many early Christian traditions Jesus' resurrection was directly associated with his exaltation and empowerment by God. The exaltation has a hermeneutic function in regard to the resurrection, essentially differentiating it from, for example, the story of Jairus, the resurrection of Elijah and so forth. In many early traditions Jesus' resurrection is his investiture as Lord and Christ, as 'Son of God in power' (Rom. 1:4). It goes along with 'being seated at the right hand of God' (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1) or receiving authority, subsequently elucidated with reference to Ps. 110:1 and Ps. 2:7. The resurrection is Jesus' solemn enthronement as the coming son of man (although that is never explicitly stated), as Lord, Messiah, Son of God: that is the gist of a very early Christian interpretation. This is evident from a number of traditions and tradition complexes: in Mt. 28:18b-20 the manifested risen one is clearly already the exalted one to whom all power has been given. Other passages refer to resurrection while at the same time implying exaltation (1 Thess. 1:9-10; Rom. 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:3-8). Sometimes only exaltation is mentioned, but the resurrection is implied (Mt. 28:18b; Eph. 4:8-10; Phil. 2:6-11; 1 Tim. 3:16; Hebr. [534]

1:3,5; 2:9; 5:5; 12:2); an intrinsic result of the resurrection is Jesus' sitting at God's right hand or his regency over the world (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1). There are also passages where resurrection and exaltation are juxtaposed, yet as two facets of a single reality.[1] Broadly speaking – provisionally allowing for other positions in the New Testament − we may say that resurrection, exaltation and empowerment denote one and the same undivided reality in the New Testament profession of faith, with resurrection as the *terminus a quo* and exaltation the *terminus ad quem* of one and the same event.[2]

It is remarkable that whereas the resurrection terminology is fairly consistent in the New Testament, ways of talking about the exaltation shift and fluctuate. Not only Luke but also Mark has his own ideas about it; and we find a variety of set formulae which do not conform to the New Testament classical model.

We have already mentioned that a characteristic of Luke's interpretation is the distinction he makes between resurrection and exaltation, between Easter and ascension. This distinction is important principally because Luke connects the sending of the Spirit, not with the risen Jesus, but quite expressly with his exaltation alone (Acts 1:2,9-10; see Lk. 24:50-53). Here for the first time the resurrection is illustrated with Ps. 16:10 (rising from the world of the dead), whereas Ps. 110:1 is repositioned to function as a proof text for the exaltation 'to God's right hand' (Acts 2:31 and 2:33-35). Thus according to Luke the church's proclamation of repentance and salvation begins only with the exaltation (Acts 5:31b); for it presupposes the gift of the Spirit, which only the exalted one can impart (Acts 2:33). For Luke the exaltation marks the end of Jesus' earthly life and the beginning of the church, thanks to the sending of the Spirit (see Acts 2:33; 5:31; 3:20). The 'short time' between exaltation (ascension) and the outpouring of the Spirit (Pentecost) is filled with expectation of the Spirit (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:8; 1:4). Even when Luke mentions resurrection and exaltation in the same breath (Acts 2:32-33; 5:30-31), he sees a distinction between them; and just as he invariably stresses that it was God who raised Jesus, he puts the emphasis on God's saving action in exalting Jesus (Lk. 9:51; Acts 1:2, 11, 22).[3] The risen Jesus promises the Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:5), but

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[1] 1 Pet. 1:21; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:19-21; 1 Pet. 3:21-22; and Rom. 1:4, where the *'ek'* implies 'by virtue of' as well as 'from the moment of the resurrection'. Resurrection and 'being Lord' are then completely identical (Rom. 10:9). Paul himself associates the title *'Kyrios'* with the resurrection (2 Cor. 4:14; Rom. 1:4; 4:24, etc.). The resurrection *is* the exaltation.

[2] Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt,* 81-98. In 1 Pet. 1:20-21; 3:18-19,21-22 resurrection and exaltation (in the setting of an emerging 'cosmic Christology') are placed side by side, without their unity being entirely obvious: *'thanatôtheis, dzôôpoiètheis, poreutheis';* this relates not to the 'rapture' model, but to the ancient model of the 'celestial journey'; the risen one makes a journey to heaven and in so doing traverses all the celestial spheres (*katabasis-anabasis* model).

[3] 'Heaven must receive him until the time of the restoration *(apokatastasis)* of all things' (Acts 3:21) has to be assessed on its own. Jesus has been taken up to God and is being held ready in heaven in expectation of the final events; only then will God 'send' him to bring refreshment to the faithful. There is no allusion whatever to what is known as 'perhaps the oldest Christology'. Along with

only the exalted Jesus can actually impart it (Acts 2:33). We might say that for Luke Jesus and God are intrinsically linked by the Spirit. His is a *Pneuma* Christology, not adoptionist but 'subordinationist': as the one filled with God's [535] Spirit, he is Son of God − from birth (Lk. 1:32, 35), at his baptism (3:22), at his exaltation (Acts 2:33). In Jesus Christ we directly encounter not the Father, but the gift of the Spirit which the Father imparts to Jesus.

John, on the other hand, sees the Father-Son relationship as direct, while also associating the gift of the Spirit − the Paraclete − with Jesus' exaltation: 'the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name' (Jn. 14:26), 'and I will pray the Father and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit. . .' (Jn. 14:16-17). In late Jewish tradition as well the messiah can pray for the Spirit, but cannot give it himself.[4] The Spirit can come only once Jesus has been glorified (Jn. 7:39); 'It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you' (16:7). As with Luke, the sending of the Spirit and the exaltation belong together. At any rate John, who displays tradition related affinities with Luke elsewhere as well, has a minimal diachronic schema: there is a brief interval between 'resurrection' and 'going to the Father' (Jn. 20:17: here the resurrected Jesus is still on his way to the Father); yet when he appears 'that same day' to the disciples he is already exalted; for he then imparts the Holy Spirit (Jn. 20:19-23; the schema of the ascension to heaven clearly features here).

Certain ancient hymns to Christ (Phil. 2:6-11 and 1 Tim. 3:16) appear to pass over the resurrection, acknowledging only the exaltation. 'He who, though he was [*hyparchôn*=being and abiding] in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:6-11). Clearly what we have here is the *katabasis-anabasis* schema: descent of the pre-existent Christ, earthly state

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others U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden,* l.c., 153-156, has shown convincingly that here Luke has adopted a piece of tradition from a late Jewish speculation about Elijah (current in circles connected with John the Baptist) and has Christianized it (as he had done elsewhere: Zechariah's hymn in the infancy narrative). The terminology is peculiar to these Elijah speculations; see Mal. 3:23-24 (see also Mk. 12:12). Cf. also Cullmann, *Christologie,* 22-8; Strack-Billerbeck, IV, 764ff; 792ff; 787-789; Sirach (Eccles.) 48:10 LXX. See above: Part Two, Section Three, note 60 (works by G. Haufe and U. Müller).

[4] In late Judaism the Messiah can also pray for God's Spirit, but not give it (E. Schweitzer, in ThWNT VI, 382; see also Strack-Billerbeck, I, 495).

of 'abasement' and, finally, post-existence.[5] In this pericope, a liturgical hymn to Christ, the resurrection is not mentioned. It features the model of abasement (Phil. 2:6-8) and exaltation (2:9-11). Death is relativized a priori by the idea of pre-existence; death is indeed the nadir of the descent, but this deadlock is already taken up in the pre-existence; passing through death, Jesus returns
[536] 'from inside it', as it were, to his former elevated state. This model does not require resurrection. The same applies to 1 Tim. 3:16: 'Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory' (1 Tim. 3:16). The antitheses in this hymn are striking: flesh-spirit; angels-nations; world-glory, while the whole is encompassed by the polarity: flesh-glory. The low/high schema structures the verse both internally and as a unit; and it is embraced in its totality by the polarity of 'mystery' and 'revelation'. The mystery hidden in God through the ages is revealed in the flesh of the man Jesus, who died; but in the heavenly lawsuit between God and the world Jesus is vindicated, 'justified', so that the indicted one emerges gloriously from this trial (*dikaioun:* see also Lk. 7:29; Rom. 3:4, which cites Ps. 50:6 in the Septuagintal translation: *nikân,* that is, emerging triumphant, victorious from battle).[6] This model uses 'existing in the flesh' and 'existing in heaven' (albeit in cited passages) in the same letters that also present the resurrection model (Phil. 3:10-11,21; 2 Tim. 2:8); but the letters are not as old as the quotations they contain.

Firstly, the mention of pre-existence does not indicate that the passages in question are of any great age. Even so, they cannot be described as secondary religious formulations, in the sense of deriving from the resurrection model. For quite apart from the idea of pre-existence the 'high-low-high' model is very old in its own right; and the sapiential model of pre-existence itself is very old. This humiliation-exaltation schema is classical in Old Testament and Judaic literature.[7] The hymn to Christ clearly alludes to deutero-Isaiahan traditions: that every knee should bow and every tongue confess recalls Is. 45:23; furthermore, in the Aquila version of Is. 52:13 we find not *pais* (*puer,* child) but *doulos* (and in the Septuagint *douleuonta*) in the same context: Is. 53:11. He 'emptied himself' is a vague allusion to the Greek Is. 49:4;[8] 'he humbled

[5] See Part Three, above: 'Wisdom' Christologies.

[6] See Schrenk, in ThWNT II, 218; E. Schweizer, '*Erniedrigung,* 164, n. 273; Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 72, 135.

[7] On this point, at any rate, E. Schweizer, *Erniedrigung,* 21-52 is undoubtedly right, as L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende gerechte?,* 26-28, has shown. See also Delorme, in *Lectio Divina,* n. 72, 136-139. See 1 Sam. 2:4-9; Ps. 27:2,5; 75:8-11; Job 5:11-16; Is. 52:13-53, where the reference is in fact not to the suffering but to the exalted servant of God (52:13); Wis. 2:12-20 and 5:1-7.

[8] L. Cerfaux, 'L'hymne au Christ-Serviteur de Dieu', in *Miscellanea historica* (in honorem A. de Meyer) (Louvain 1946), vol. 1, 117-30; J.T. Sanders, *The New Testament christological hymns* (Cambridge 1971), 59.

himself (Phil. 2:8) reminds us of Is. 53:8, while 'was made in the likeness of men' refers to Is. 53:3; lastly, 'unto death' (Phil. 2:8b) takes up Is. 53:8 and Is. 53:12. Is. 49:7 speaks of 'the Lord' (*Kyrios*) and 'my Name' (Is. 45:4). If L. Cerfaux saw a close affinity between this hymn to Christ (Phil. 2:6-11) and the Greek Isaiah, J. Sanders underscored the similarities with the Hebrew text, especially with Is. 53.[9] 'He emptied himself' (Phil. 2:7) − nowhere to be found in the Greek Isaiah − is an exact rendering of the Hebrew (Is. 53:12), so the [537] hymn to Christ was inspired by Is. 52:13-53:12 (see the *Ebed* servant term in Is. 52:13).

Yet one should not forget that these Old Testament ideas had undergone changes in late Judaic thought, which is the immediate background to the earliest Christian reflection. In the hymn (Phil. 2:6-8) the Old Testament and early Christian model of the 'suffering and exalted righteous one' is applied solely to the pre-existent Christ. It also seems likely that in pre-Christian Judaism the deutero-Isaiahan exalted and suffering righteous one was already identified with the apocalyptic son of man;[10] in any case, the exalted 'suffering and righteous one' acquires the judicial function of the son of man.[11]

But whatever the contribution of apocalyptic Jewish ideas may have been, the crucial factor is the recollection of Jesus' earthly life: 'Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled', and the least will be the greatest in God's kingdom.[12] The suffering righteous man knows that he can depend on God, even when he sees no way out (Mk. 14:25 parallels). At first sight this schema of humiliation and exaltation does not imply recognition (or denial) of the resurrection.[13] In the oldest strata of the early Christian son of man tradition there is no explicit reference to resurrection, but it does refer to Jesus' exaltation with God and his coming parousia. This Jewish theme occurs in a number of variants, sometimes including the category of the resurrection or

[9] J. Sanders, *Christological hymns,* 60.

[10] See above: Part Three, Section One, at 'the son of man' and Part Three, Section Two, §1. Also E. Schweizer, *Erniedrigung,* 30; L. Ruppert, *Jesus, als der leidende Gerechte?,* 70; and recently: G. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* 77-78.

[11] J. Sanders, *Christological hymns,* 62. See especially Wis. 2:12-20 with 5:1-7.

[12] Mt. 23:12; Lk. 14:11; 18:14; Jas. 1:12; 4:10; 1 Pet. 4:13-14; 5:6-10.

[13] Berger, *Amen-Worte,* 56. Hahn, *Hoheitstitel,* 130, and G. Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt,* 96, n. 42, and 'Die Auferstehung und die historische Kritik', in BuL 9 (1968) 37-53, rightly deny that the exaltation motif must be older than the resurrection motif. It would be wrong to infer from that, however, that the exaltation motif derives from the resurrection motif. Both are quite old (Marxsen, *Die Auferstehung von Jesus von Nazareth,* 147ff). That it is secondary, i.e., deduced from the resurrection (thus: Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 74; Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 173-175) is by no means proven. See also U. Wilckens, *Auferstehung,* 132-144 and G. Bertram, sub *Erhöhung,* in RAC VI, 22-43; W. Thüsing, *Erhöhungsvorstellung,* l.c. (1967), 216-219 and (1968), 226-228; and Tödt, *Menschensohn,* 228-257. Vielhauer is certainly correct when he argues that the traditions which include the appearances identify resurrection and exaltation. What is more, Weeden has shown that the original Markan gospel, which knows nothing of Jesus' appearances, links the exaltation to the parousia and not to the resurrection. Yet the idea of exaltation in no way presupposes, as Hahn asserts (*Hoheitstitel,* 113-115 and 126-132), a delayed parousia (rightly against this, Vielhauer, in *Aufsätze,* 164).

that of the assumption of the soul into heaven (either immediately after death or after a stay in Sheol), sometimes the category of 'eternal life' with God. So when we hear about the exalted Jesus dwelling with God without any mention of the resurrection (as in the Q tradition), that is no ground for simply postulating the resurrection; after all, the same event can be envisaged in terms of other categories. A broad late Jewish tradition could easily conceive of the suffering righteous one being exalted to God's presence without a resurrection; and both Q and the aforementioned hymns to Christ are clearly in line with such a broad late Jewish tradition. In other words, once reflection about life after death had crystallized in Israel, resurrection (Dan. 12:1-3) was a possible solution but by no means the only one (see above). Although silence about the resurrection is no proof that people did not actually have it in mind, we cannot presuppose the resurrection idea per se. It is also noteworthy that Psalms 2 and 110 (exaltation minus the resurrection idea) were applied to Christ earlier than
[538] Ps. 16 (which speaks of liberation from the kingdom of the dead, but only by Luke: Acts 2:25-28; 13:33-37). In the four credal strands analysed above the *maranatha* Christology, the Christology of the exaltation of the prophetic/sapiential, Solomonic son of David (less accurately, the *theios anèr* Christology), as well as the Wisdom Christologies become intelligible in a tradition which envisages exaltation without resurrection, these traditions, moreover, which have no need of an empty tomb or appearances to acclaim the crucified one as the royal Lord exalted to be with God. What one can say is that among both Jews and Jewish Christians the general belief in life after death (for the righteous) increasingly assumed the form of belief in physical resurrection (a clear trend in late Jewish literature); and this gradual ascendancy of the resurrection idea over other conceptions of the actual assumption into heaven also occurred in Christian circles during the first few generations. But with or without resurrection, affirmation of belief in Jesus' assumption into heaven in no way depends on a putative empty tomb or appearances; both presuppose belief in Jesus' assumption into heaven after his death, whether after a sojourn in the realm of the dead or directly from the cross. In a Jewish context all these models were available; and in any event each of them entailed the notion of Jesus' truly 'living with God'. Only when people began to see that Jesus' deliverance was also a victory over death and every local Christian congregation began to reflect on the salvific implication of Jesus' death did the idea of resurrection force itself upon all early Christian communities everywhere as the best way of conveying that he was alive with God.

This development explains the fluctuations in the definition of the relation between resurrection and exaltation. Only once the resurrection idea had become 'canonical' for all local Christian churches did varying interpretations emerge regarding the relation between resurrection and exaltation, both of

which had initially expressed substantially the same idea ('life with God'). When the resurrection idea was imported and explicated in congregations that at first had spoken only of a 'taking up (exaltation) into heaven' − or vice versa – it did indeed raise problems: were the two identical or distinct? The scriptural proof, sometimes based on Ps. 110 (exaltation) and sometimes on Ps. 16:10 (redemption from Sheol), played a role in this.

If Th. J. Weeden's study of Mark − on this point, at any rate − is correct (and his arguments strike me as plausible),[14] even Mark still linked the exaltation with the parousia, not with the resurrection (Mk. 8:38; 9:2-8; 10:37; 13:26; 14:62, read in light of 13:14-27; 14:62 and 13:26; see above under *Maranatha* Christology). For Mark the resurrection provides grounds for expecting the parousia, for the confirmation of Jesus' status as the (soon to come) son of man. But the inauguration of Jesus' immediate lordship does not coincide with the resurrection (or, as in Luke, with the ascent to heaven) but with the parousia (Mk. 13:26 and 14:62b).[15] Thus in this ancient Christology the resurrection is seen, not primarily as God correcting the scandal of the cross but as the ground of the approaching parousia, ushering in the eschatological universal rising from the dead, and the confirmation of Jesus' message of God's coming reign;[16] the present (risen Jesus) already *is* the dawn of the future (the parousia; God's reign). Thus the coming of God's reign gradually came to be interpreted christologically. The risen one or (for others) the exalted one is also the one soon to come: the *eschaton* is about to happen. That was the original Easter experience. Resurrection and parousia, although distinct, were closely related. Thus the Q community did not see the twelve as the foundation of the church; instead they, along with Jesus, were the eschatological judges of the dawning eschaton (Mt. 19:28=Lk. 22:28-30).[17] The Easter experience was initially an experience of Jesus as the one soon to come; it was the assurance of the imminent parousia, confirmation of God's coming reign, the substance of Jesus' preaching. So resurrection and parousia were originally not antithetical; the dawn of God's reign was initially bound up with the parousia.[18] Mark's gospel continues to testify to this very early Christian notion in later times. The fact that the resurrection *as* exaltation came to be focal (this is how I would resolve the famous controversy between F. Hahn and Ph. Vielhauer) is indicative of a later (though still very early) stage, in which the 'quasi-identity' [539]

[14] See above in this Part, first credal model. Weeden, *Mark-traditions,* 126ff

[15] Echoes of a similar idea are to be found in Acts 3:20,21a; Mt. 25:1-13; Phil. 2:10-11; Col. 1:15-20 and 1 Pet. 3:19,22. See also R. Fuller, *Foundations,* 145ff and 185-186; G. Schille, *Anfänge,* 125ff.

[16] Thüsing, 'Erhöhungsvorstellung' (article), 228.

[17] Recollections of this almost 'quasi-identity' between resurrection and parousia are to be found in a few remarkable texts: 'There are some standing here who will not taste death before they *see* the kingdom of God come with power' (Mk. 9:1; Lk. 9:27). So too Jn. 21:18-23; 1 Thess. 4:15.

[18] Schulz, *Q-Quelle,* 75.

between resurrection and parousia had loosened and (in quarters where Jesus' assumption into heaven had always been interpreted as resurrection) Ps. 110:1 was used to merge resurrection and exaltation.[19] But originally the resurrection was the beginning of a series of eschatological events that would reach a climax in the parousia. On this view God would account for his procedure, not **at** the resurrection but at the parousia, which would vindicate Jesus and his disciples.

[540] Thus the assumption into heaven or resurrection was widely regarded in early Christian circles as the presupposition for the approaching deliverance of believers, thanks to the redemptive activity of the coming Christ.[20] Redemption was seen as an eschatological event to the benefit of anyone confessing Jesus as the Christ living with God or as risen but 'soon to come'. Within this trend there were still two schools of thought: during the brief period of waiting for the coming Christ the Q community saw itself as sustained by the pneumatic activity of the risen and already exalted Lord; Mark, on the other hand, visualises an interim in which God's eschatological, pneumatic gifts vitalized the Christian church − in the absence, however, of the risen but not yet exalted Lord. Finally, for Luke the forty day period of the risen but not yet exalted Lord is the concluding episode of Jesus' earthly life. Jesus' exaltation is followed almost immediately by the sending of the Spirit by the exalted one, the beginning of the church's life. Hence Luke reacts negatively to an interpretation that resurrection and exaltation are simply the basis for an imminent parousia,[21] although he does not discount it (Acts 1:11). Without excluding a futurist eschatology, Luke stresses a 'realized' one, the redeemed life of Christians in the church. He changes the eschatological future in Mk. 10:26 into here-and-now presence (Lk. 18:26); Lk. 9:24 simply discards Mk. 13:20. For Luke salvation lies in membership of the church.

Paul has a completely different angle on this. His concept of Christian salvation entails a fundamental tension between present and future, however intrinsic their interrelationship. At Corinth Paul was confronted with Christians who believed they had already been resurrected thanks to their mystical union with Christ.[22] 'In a spirit of enthusiasm' they had resolved the

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[19] Hence it doesn't seem justifiable to me that the oldest motif is not the eschatologically 'coming one', but the son of man already enthroned in heaven, as Balz maintains in *Methodische Probleme*, 106.

[20] E.g. 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rom. 5:9-10; 10:9,13; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; 1 Pet. 1:5; Mk. 13:1,3,20 par. Mt. 10:22; Mk. 16:16.

[21] Lk. 1:69,71,77; 19:9, and Acts 13:26; 16:17; Lk. 8:12,36-50; 19:10, and Acts 2:47; 11:14; 14:9; 15:1, 11; 16:30-31.

[22] J.H. Wilson, 'The Corinthians who say There is no resurrection of the dead', in ZNW 59 (1968), 90-107; R. Pesch, 'Heilszukunft und Zukunft des Heils', in *Gestalt und Anspruch des Neuen Testaments* (ed. G. Schreiner) (Würzburg 1969), 313-329; H. A. Wilcke, *Das Problem eines messianischen Zwischenreiches bei Paulus* (Zürich 1967), 60-62; G. Kegel, *Auferstehung Jesu,* 38-47.

tension between present and future in favour of the present, from which Paul inferred that they were denying their still pending bodily resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12). For him it meant that salvation itself was at stake: if the futurity of salvation was denied (by 'dissolving' it in present experience), its very essence was overlooked. These Corinthian Christians were not denying Jesus' resurrection but were equating their present state, so to speak, with that of Jesus; so for them the ultimate salvation of their coming resurrection was quite superfluous. What is Paul's argument? First he refers them to the creed with its *memoria Jesu,* that is, the recollections of Jesus that were passed on in the local churches − not just 'memories' but formative and informative recollections of [541] Jesus' actual offer to men . But his argument goes further: 'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins' (1 Cor. 15:17). Hence if there is no coming bodily resurrection for Christians, then neither did Jesus Christ rise from the dead (the very core of their creed); then their faith is baseless and so, instead of being 'already risen', they are still in their sins, and for believers who have died there is no hope at all (1 Cor. 15:18). Thus if the resurrection has already been accomplished in believers, everything was in vain. Paul is reacting against a one-sided realized eschatology that turned salvation into a fleeting, enthusiastic illusion. For Paul Jesus' resurrection is the ground of the end-time resurrection of believers (he is not yet thinking of a general resurrection); between the two there is a *tagma,* a before and after (1 Cor. 15:23). For Paul (as opposed to the deutero-Pauline writings) the resurrection of believers cannot be anticipated: death is 'the last enemy' (1 Cor. 15:28; see 15:24-28). Thus there is a distinction between Jesus' resurrection and sending of the Spirit on the one hand and, on the other, the future salvation of believers, which inheres in the eschatological resurrection. The Pauline letters proper, despite their explication of Jesus' resurrection (in contrast to the Q and the Markan traditions) are nonetheless written in the same purely eschatological perspective. We 'were saved in hope' (Rom. 8:24). Hence one could say that Paul does not posit an 'interim regime'. Jesus the Lord commands the power of final salvation, the *Pneuma,* which will renew us bodily (1 Cor. 15:29-34). Thus Paul inverted the final apocalyptic expectations: eschatology is grounded in Christology and not (as argued e.g. by G. Fohrer[23]) the other way round. In this respect Paul initially expected the parousia and bodily resurrection to be at hand (1 Cor. 15:51).[24] As in Mark's gospel, the conclusion for Christians is to 'be steadfast' (1 Cor. 15:58). In Paul's view the interval between Jesus' resurrection and his parousia (the bodily resurrection

[23] G. Fohrer, 'Das Alte Testament und des Thema "Christologie" ', in EvTh 30 (1970), 281-298.

[24] For those still living Paul no longer speaks of their being 'caught up' to meet Jesus, as in 1 Thess. 4:17, but of a 'transformation' of the body (1 Cor. 15:51). The resurrection is not something apocalyptic, but a saving event in itself; a resurrection-in-glory.

of believers) would be filled with the worldwide mission to the gentiles; for only when the full number of gentiles preordained by God had been converted would the parousia bring Israel's final deliverance (Rom. 11:25-27; see 13:11, as opposed to 1 Thess. 5:2). Here Paul stands the traditional Jewish view on its head, for according to that tradition Israel's eschatological redemption and
[542] world ascendancy would see all nations converging on Zion; only then would Israel's deliverance assume universal significance. According to Paul Israel would be saved only when all nations acknowledge the Christ; for him the Christian mission to the Jews seemed a futile exercise for now. That is why, for Israel's sake, he gives urgent priority to the mission among the gentiles, the Christian 'world mission' as the great event between the resurrection and the parousia.

Finally, the time has come to answer the question raised earlier: was Jesus, who proclaimed the imminent arrival of God's reign, mistaken? People often try to circumvent the problem by arguing that Jesus was not speaking of God's final salvation as being 'near at hand' in a temporal sense, but of an ontological 'nearness' of the God of salvation. This distinction does not appear anywhere in the New Testament. Jesus did in fact speak of *God's* rapidly approaching parousia, probably in terms of the coming son of man. The temporal/linear aspect cannot be eliminated from his message; and it would be false hermeneutics to explain the temporal aspect as a historically variable 'metaphor' whereas 'ontological proximity' was the actually intended core of the message. Besides, that would neutralize one of the first Christians' motives to proclaim Jesus as the risen one. We have seen that Jesus preached the imminent arrival of God's salvation and that this certainty did not wane when he came face to face with death; also that − uncomprehendingly, perhaps, but with heartfelt conviction − he integrated his death with his offer of salvation, the meaning of his whole life. So when he died the disciples faced the question: was this man mistaken (the kingdom of God has not come) or was he right? In the latter case the parousia of God which he had proclaimed had indeed occurred − in the resurrection of Jesus; which would make the resurrection the foundation of the coming parousia of Jesus the son of man. Thus the Christian conviction that Jesus was not mistaken in his *Abba* experience was one of the factors inducing Christians to identify God's coming rule, as proclaimed by Jesus, with the risen crucified one: in *him* the kingdom of God *had come.* That was the fundamental religious intuition which the first Christians expressed when they proclaimed that Jesus had risen from the dead. The kingdom of God which he proclaimed had come, just as he had said: in the risen crucified one. (This will be further explored in Part Four.) It should be noted that initially
[543] Christians interpreted Jesus' resurrection as the beginning of his immediately imminent parousia; this generation would live to see the great event. They

were already living 'at the end of the times' (1 Pet. 1:20; 2 Pet. 3:3; Jude 18; also 2 Tim. 3:1; Mk. 9:1). The earliest phase of the Q community is the sole witness to a period in which there was as yet no indication that Jesus' parousia might be 'delayed'. All other traditions that we know already confronted the new situation: the non-arrival of Jesus' glorious appearance (Mk. 13:32; Mt. 24:36; Mk. 13:30; Mt. 10:23; Mt. 25:1-13; Lk. 12:38; Mt. 24:25-41; Lk. 12:42-46). Although this 'tarrying' did result in a crisis, Jesus' resurrection supplied the irrevocable guarantee of the coming parousia, so that for the Christians nothing essential was altered by the delay; it merely enabled them to discern more clearly the tension between 'already' and 'not yet', between a present and a future eschatology.

Conclusion. The New Testament interpretation of Jesus' resurrection – under the impact of what had happened to Jesus and, after his death, to the disciples − shattered the apocalyptic concept of resurrection. Although history continued as usual, God's final saving action had been accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth, the risen crucified one. Despite the contradiction of his rejection and death Jesus, who had proclaimed the imminent reign of God, had not been mistaken. By raising him from the dead, God identified with him, who in his lifetime had identified with God's cause, his coming reign; Jesus Christ himself was the reign of God. So Jesus, who proclaimed not himself but the reign and lordship of God, as it were and without suspecting it, was proclaiming 'himself': the proclaimer *is* the proclaimed one.

This ushered in the eschatological age, whose hallmark is experience of the eschatological gift of God's Spirit, referred to (with the likely exception of the Markan gospel) as the 'Spirit of Jesus' (Acts 2:33; 10:44ff; 19:5-6; Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:19; Gal. 4:6). And Jesus' Spirit is the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:12; see 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:11; 7:40; 12:3). The eschatological age would begin with the sending of the Spirit (Joel 3:1ff; Ezek. 36-37) and be accompanied by forgiveness of sins and the new law, written in the hearts of the faithful (Jer. 31:31ff). And: 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom' (2 Cor. 3:17). People had encountered this freedom in the life of the earthly Jesus; it was human freedom, based on dedicated commitment to God's absolute freedom. The 'freedom of the children of God' (Rom. 8:21) was characteristic of early Christianity, which had [544] disengaged itself from the Law. The basic creed of the first Christians was: Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, that is, the one completely filled with God's eschatological Spirit. He is God's end-time, final revelation and the paradigm of eschatological humanity.

Section Three

FROM A 'THEOLOGY OF JESUS' TO A CHRISTOLOGY

Chapter 1

THEOLOGY 'RAISED TO THE SECOND POWER'

The gospels relate how, based on his *Abba* experience and in contrast to the history of human suffering, Jesus announced and offered salvation from God and a real future in word and deed. Confronted with the historical rejection of Jesus' message and eventually of his person, the first Christians, on the strength of the renewal of their own lives after their master's death and recalling their fellowship with him during his life on earth, confessed Jesus as the risen crucified one, in whom they had experienced final salvation; in him God brought about redemption, salvation and liberation. Using existing religious and cultural key concepts and in virtue of this salvific function, they called Jesus the Christ, Son of God, their Lord.

All this is still part of the 'theology' of Jesus of Nazareth: that is to say, reflection on what Jesus himself had said about the coming reign of God as human salvation, liberation and redemption: Jesus' discourse about God, embodied in his ministry, conduct and death: 'For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power' (1 Cor. 4:20). Living contact with this person who proclaimed the kingdom of God was experienced as God-given salvation. This yielded, as the outcome of primarily theological, religious reflection, the credal affirmation that God himself, the God of salvation history, had acted decisively in Jesus for the salvation of men: 'It is God who through Jesus reconciled us to himself' (2 Cor. 5:18). In that sense all Jesus' honorific titles, including 'Son of God', are primarily functional, elements of salvation history [546]
− even in the late sapiential Johannine gospel with its concept of pre-existence. As a matter of fact, in the traditions which John espoused the Torah was also pre-existent, existing with God prior to all creation, although no Jew would have regarded the pre-existent Torah of the wisdom tradition as a sort of 'second divine person' − not even John in respect of his 'pre-existent logos', which he identifies with Jesus of Nazareth and which he prefers to call Son rather than logos.

However, logos, Torah, even *pneuma,* as hypostatized entities were really

abstract concepts, *theologoumena.* Of course, they were a living, concrete reality expressing God's will (the Torah); after all, God himself was Torah. But Mosaic law, which flourished among the Jewish people and to which the Jews laid claim, as it were, in their sacred books − in other words, it had taken up its abode among them − was not the transcendent God. Jesus' period abounded in intermediaries between God and man *because* God was conceived of as exalted, transcendent and unapproachable, and his immanence could only be envisaged by means of an intermediary link through all sorts of heavenly beings − angels and even higher: hypostatized entities such as 'law', 'logos', 'wisdom'. These served to articulate the transcendent God's involvement with the world (of men), while people still trembled before his unapproachable, inaccessible transcendence. People throughout the East at that time knew no other conception of the real-life immanence of the transcendent God − least of all in 'sophisticated' circles. The result was that one's relationship to God was essentially determined by one's attitude to, for instance, the pre-existent Torah, the pre-existent sabbath, the pre-existent end-time prophet; that is to say, one's attitude towards mundane, visible things – 'indwelt' by these pre-existent, 'exemplary' namesakes or identified with them – determined one's relationship with God.

This is why Judaism identified prophetic figures with wisdom and the logos, or with archangels. Thus Moses and Jacob were identified with the pre-existent mediator of creation, while Enoch and the son of man were identified with pre-existent Wisdom (1 Enoch 41:9; 42:1-3; 48:7; 51:3). We have said that this was a sapiential extension of the Deuteronomic tradition of the 'angel' and the 'messenger': 'do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for My Name is in him' (Ex. 23:21). Wisdom, taking up her abode among men, came to be identified, now with the Law or the sabbath, now with
[547] Jacob or the end-time prophet: one's attitude to these intermediaries of salvation was decisive for salvation offered by God (cf. Mk. 8:38 and Lk. 10:6). These identifications served to legitimate their message by claiming 'unique transcendence', that is, mediating the transcendent God. It was this identification with pre-existent beings that guaranteed their exclusive authority as mediators of salvation between God and man. This is true of both low and high sapiential schemes.

The remarkable thing is that Christians applied this schema (which in late Judaism served to underwrite the divine authority of an earthly being) to a concrete historical person, Jesus of Nazareth. That was a radically new departure and, in a religious context, unprecedented – apart from the ascription of divine status to the Roman emperors (prompted by political rather than religious interest). True, inter-testamental literature, both before and after Jesus, mentions the pre-existent Enoch or Ezra, who after their

earthly lives were taken up to God and exalted. They are called son of man, son of God and Lord of the universe, and all God's proper names are assigned to them. Although they were once historical beings in a remote and hazy past, in fact they were now abstract *theologoumena.* On the one hand this shows that the honorific titles given to Jesus in the New Testament were primarily functional, in the context of salvation history, on the other hand that in the historical life of Jesus certain things had become apparent − an authority clearly deriving from God − which tended to be applied to this existing hermeneutic model. Being a model, it confronts one with an earthly manifestation in and through which one's personal relationship with God is determined.

Since the idea of using these existing models is to clarify a function − more particularly Jesus' crucial, saving function of bringing salvation from God − we cannot evade the question: who is this Jesus, if all that happened in and through him came from God? Particularly among Greco-Jewish Christians, and later even more so among those from a pagan Hellenistic background (which inquired not only about what happened in a person but what and who that person actually was), the question of *ousia* or essence, in the sense of ontological identity, was bound to arise. Neither could Aramaic and Greco-Jewish Christians, within their own ontology, avoid the question. For them it [548] became even more searching: what did the individual person Jesus, who talked about God as his *Abba,* mean for God himself? A primary insight into the actual nature of the 'God of Jesus', the *Abba,* raises the question of the 'Jesus *of God*': how did this Jesus relate to God as '*my* son', '*my* servant', '*my* holy one' and so forth? Sooner or later God's 'proprietary' relationship' with Jesus – affirmed throughout the New Testament − was bound to lead to more searching questions, a second stage of reflection. Who was this Jesus, who was God's 'exclusive property' to such a degree? Particularly their belief in the risen crucified one – which the first Christians saw as evidence of God's exclusive proprietorship – demanded further reflection. For Jesus was not an 'instrument of salvation', in the sense of Moses using his staff to strike water from barren rock. For the Jews the fact that definitive salvation from God had been encountered in the man Jesus and not in some heavenly being was a sure sign of totally gratuitous, divine election: it expressed God's pure pleasure. Jesus for his part – it seemed incontrovertible to them − had not betrayed his election, but in love and fidelity to Yahweh had lived and moved among people, caring for them, until he was broken by it. From a religious standpoint that says everything within a particular paradigm. Yet the New Testament's attempts to determine the moment at which God's choice was concretely and effectively accomplished in the man Jesus reveal subtle shifts, pointing to ongoing reflection, continually refining, correcting and deepening the original

conception. Identification, it seemed, could be intensified without ever reaching a conclusive 'delimitation'. This second, further reflection does not actually yield any totally new insights; yet neither is it meant simply as 'meta-language', talk *about* 'religious talk about Jesus' in a linguistic analytical sense. However necessary the analysis may be, it is not a matter of the actual identification (the act of faith), but of the person identified: deepened religious insight into the already interpreted and identified Jesus. And then all that has already been said about Jesus of Nazareth can be reformulated from another standpoint − that of God's saving initiative. Of course this does not yield any new and different ways of revelation − a sort of private access − that would show us just how *God* sees Jesus. It is only via the 'theology of Jesus of
[549] Nazareth', in his words and his actions, that we can discover what God revealed about this Jesus. But this second concern is oriented differently from the first. We might fairly call it – in terms of modern linguistic analysis at any rate − second-order assertions, without implying 'second class' affirmations of belief. This distinction is important, and more fundamental than what is usually referred to as the hierarchy of religious truths, or rather, it gives us an objective criterion (apart from personal, subjective, theological predilections) for establishing a real hierarchy in the whole of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. If we affirm our belief that God saves human beings in Jesus (first-order assertion), how are we to understand Jesus himself, in whom God's definitive saving action was realized (second-order assertion)? If one holds the first belief, one is already a Christian, even though a whole gamut of finer distinctions may be made at the level of second-order affirmations. Primary and fundamental Christian orthodoxy is to be gauged mainly according to first-order criteria. Hence the history of christological dogmas seems to lie on the plane of second-order affirmations, albeit with the purpose of and real concern for safeguarding the first-order affirmations. In a second phase of reflection we seek to answer the question of how encounter with Jesus can confront one with God's definitive saving activity. In answering this question human reflection plays a major role. In other words 'Christology' is more relative than a 'theo-logy' of Jesus, although by no means unimportant, if only for a proper grasp of that 'theo-logy'. Whereas in his message Jesus is not concerned about his own identity – it seems to consist in self-identification with God's cause as the cause of man, and the salvation and wholeness of man as the cause of God − Christology shifts the focus to *Jesus'* identity. This already took place in the New Testament, where God's reign assumed the face of Jesus and became identified with Jesus Christ's lordship. An explicit Christology seeks to probe that primary, religious interpretation of Jesus: Jesus, implicated as subject and person in his message and praxis, is 'analysed'. If person and message are intrinsically conjoined in Jesus, as appears from the

analysis, what does this signify for the actual person of Jesus? This is a legitimate question.

From this inquiry, already started in the New Testament, the early church eventually produced the Nicene dogma of Jesus' 'consubstantial being' with [550] the Father, and later on, as the Chalcedonian counterbalance to that, his nature as consubstantial with all humanity: one and the same person − Jesus Christ − is true God and true man, not in a hybrid blend but *asunchutôs* and *atreptôs,* without merging and without loss of proper substance and significance, and at the same time *adiairetôs* and *achôristôs,* indissolubly one. The historical growth of this dogma is familiar enough (or can be found in many places elsewhere). In this book I have only to explain how and why people wanted to identify Jesus' person more exactly, the inevitability of these questions and the limitations and hazards of every theoretical answer to them; secondly, I must explain the difficulties these early attempts at precision raised for people with a different cultural orientation, and the fresh challenge they pose for us. To avoid a totally abstract argument I give a brief summary of fundamental data from the history of the interpretive process, which culminated in the christological dogma of Chalcedon. The aim is to show that it was *inevitable* that the questions be raised, and at the same time that the hermeneutic horizon in which an answer was sought was not *necessary*.

Chapter 2

GROWING REFLECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TRADITIONS

It is impossible to trace a chronological thread in this reflection's growth in early Christianity. We have pointed out repeatedly in this study that a 'secondary' element in a particular early Christian community is not per se a late creation of that community: it may have been a very old element in another community, but was only incorporated into the Jesus tradition of other churches, who recognized and acknowledged their Jesus in it, after reciprocal contact between the various local traditions. (This does permit some chronological specification.) In view of the ample analysis in Parts Two and Three, the following brief survey will suffice. [551]

Nowhere in our scrutiny of the New Testament did we find that Jesus called himself the Son of God; what we pointed out was Jesus' extraordinary − and religio-historically remarkable − way of addressing God as *Abba,* and the fact that this Father experience was the source and soul of his message and praxis. However, the focus was not on Jesus but on the Father. This raises the question of who Jesus is in this intimate relationship with God the Father. Even if dodging this question were of small consequence, it would be illogical or burying one's head in the sand to do so − unless the prior historical data have long ago been thrust aside.

The New Testament still contains vestiges of the diverse solutions to this question provided by early Christianity.

(a) In line with the Deuteronomic messenger idea a very old tradition calls Jesus 'the Son', the one who scrupulously obeys the commandments of God the Father and faithfully passes on his Father's precepts to his followers. He is 'the Son', God's eschatological messenger.

(b) In the oldest Jesus tradition the title 'Jesus the son of David' is unknown: the Q tradition, in which the 'messiah' title does not occur, actually seems to refute the Davidic/messianic status of Jesus. The pre-Markan tradition (which underlies Mk. 12:35-37) also rejects the dynastic/Davidic messianism for Jesus with reference to Ps. 110. But in Greek-speaking, Judaeo-Christian local

churches the title of messianic son of David was assigned to Jesus − and, as appears from Mark, did so in the Jewish, prophetic/sapiential sense of 'miracle worker' and exorcist. In the pre-Pauline tradition, adapted by Paul, the earthly Jesus is a son of David, a Jewish man; but this actually points to the abasement of the pre-existent Son of God, who only through the resurrection becomes God's empowered Son and Lord. For Luke (gospel and Acts), on the other hand, the son of David is the Son of God. From this grew the idea that in his earthly life Jesus was sent exclusively to Israel: as messianic son of David, fulfiller of Israel's promises, he was sent to assemble Israel.[1] Even in the Qumrân literature the title 'Son of God' was applied to the messianic son of David on the basis of 2 Sam. 7:14 and Ps. 2.[2] But this title was superseded in the
[552] resurrection, which made him 'Son of God' for all men.

(c) Our analysis of the *Maranatha* Christology showed that the risen Jesus was identified with the one who would come at the close of the age to judge the world. Here Jesus is the universal Lord of the eschatological future. In this we can probably discern two distinct strands. Although themselves already the eschatological community (so the last days were held to have started already), some local churches regarded Jesus as the risen son of man, destined to judge the world but not as yet solemnly vested with full eschatological powers; for others the risen Jesus was also the exalted son of man, operative here and now in his eschatological (Q) community. In both cases, however, not only the risen but also the earthly Jesus was called 'Son of God' (for different reasons).

(d) In Luke's so-called missionary sermons, delivered by Peter and Paul, the two earlier interpretations of Jesus are combined in a single view: during his earthly life Jesus was the messianic son of David sent to Israel, but his resurrection publicly demonstrated that God had preordained him to be the universal Christ, Lord and Son of God (especially Acts 2:36; 5:30-31; and the pre-Pauline layers of Rom.1:3-4).[3] Here the disclosure of Jesus' 'sonship' is associated with his resurrection, to which is applied (see Acts 4:25-26; 13:33) the 'you are my son' of the royal psalms (Ps. 2:7 and 2 Sam. 7:14). In these passages resurrection has its full, rich meaning : risen from the dead, exalted to be with God, filled with the Spirit and sender of the Spirit, and soon to come in glory. In other words, Davidic messianism acquires new significance from the resurrection: the risen crucified one is the Christ (messiah). And so the messianic sonship of Jesus came to be bound up with his death and resurrection.

(e) In the baptismal traditions, incorporated into the gospels in the

[1] See above in Part Three.
[2] E.g. W. Grundmann, 'Die Frage nach der Gottessohnschaft des Messias im Lichte von Qumrân', in *Bibel und Qumrân* (Festschrift for H. Bardtke) (Berlin 1968), 86-111; P. Pokorný, *Der Gottessohn* (Zürich 1971), 23.
[3] See above.

Christology of each of the four evangelists, God's proclamation that Jesus was his Son is explicitly linked with his baptism by John (Mk. 1:10-11; Mt. 3:16-17; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn. 1:32): 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.' The divine voice speaking these words from heaven in fact derives from God's biblical words, for example in Ps. 2:7 and Is. 42:1. The Spirit conferred on Jesus is the eschatological gift. Psalm 2:7, used elsewhere to denote Jesus' exaltation at his resurrection (Acts 13:33), here shows that even at his baptism Jesus was the Son filled with God's Spirit (God is with him, he is with God). From the moment of his baptism Jesus is the Son, the 'messiah', 'servant of God', the 'eschatological prophet' who has to be heeded (Deut. 18:15). In other words, this is God's truth about Jesus: this is how God sees him and wants him. [553] Although the accent is on his appointment as eschatological prophet, the messianic and royal anointment is clearly in evidence. Put differently: since his baptism Jesus is eschatologically filled with God's Spirit: God is with him, just as in Is. 63-64 God's coming, after the crossing of the Red Sea, is described as the heavens opening and God's Spirit descending from on high. This is now fulfilled in Jesus when he emerges from the waters of Jordan. So Jesus' 'fulfilment' with the Spirit realizes Is. 11:2; 42:1-2; 61:1; Ps. 2:7: he fulfils all the promises to Israel. That is why no passage of Scripture cited in these baptismal traditions can be accurately located; they allude to fundamental promises in the Old Testament, in which fragments from recognizable texts are 'adapted' and synthesized to accord with people's historical experience of Jesus. They are answers to questions raised by the community: How could Jesus let himself be baptized? Was he a sinner, then? And does that make him subordinate to John the Baptist? A 'Son of God' Christology underlies this interpretive approach. These baptismal traditions explain the whole public ministry of the earthly Jesus on the assumption of his full possession of the eschatological gift of the Spirit. But they do not suggest that his baptism should be regarded as his calling On the contrary, the models they use and the style point to an 'interpretive vision':[4] Jesus' baptism is interpreted as the beginning of God's saving activity in his 'beloved Son', who, filled with the Spirit, was sent to Israel. By having himself baptized Jesus accepted that God was at work in John the Baptist; at the same time he performed (according to the aforementioned interpretation) his first prophetic act. Thus the vision functions as an element of a religious interpretation of history; the narrative and words convey the living tradition concerning the historical impact of what took place at the Jordan. Whoever encountered this baptized Jesus was confronted with salvation or rejection. The New Testament is not concerned with what went on, psychologically, in Jesus' mind at the time; this event is the point of departure

[4] Fr. Lentzen-Deis, *Die Taufe Jesu nach den Synoptikern* (Frankfurt 1970), 288.

for its interpretation of Jesus' subsequent history. Again 'Son of God' is a functional, salvation-historical designation: Jesus' was sent for the salvation of God's people; he is 'God's Son' for Israel.

(f) The 'today' of Ps. 2:7 − 'You are my son, today I have begotten you' −
[554] had already been applied to the resurrection and afterwards to Jesus' baptism by John; finally, it was applied to the 'today' of Jesus' conception or birth. At first sight Ps. 2:7 appears unconnected with the Matthean or Lukan accounts of the virgin birth; yet – possibly because of its prior application to the events at the river Jordan – it forms the background to the tradition of the virgin birth. It is the 'today' of God's appointment of Jesus as 'his Son' for Israel.

In the first place Mt. 1:18-20 and Lk. 1:26-38 are the only two places in the New Testament referring to a 'virgin birth'. Recent exegetical studies have shown that elsewhere, in other early Christian communities, it was unknown (or actually refuted) and there is no question of 'historical information', for instance, information acquired from Mary's private family tradition as is often said. It is a theological reflection, not a source of new informative data, as the New Testament texts themselves show quite clearly.[5] Besides, all the roots of the existing tradition common to Matthew and Luke point to a Greco-Jewish source; it is an early, yet relatively recent, tradition in early Christianity, and moreover was and remained confined to certain local churches. It appears that the original tradition on which Luke and Matthew drew did not explicitly mention a 'fatherless' birth but emphasized the (soteriological) fact that Jesus' human existence as bringer of salvation was entirely the work of God's Spirit, not just from the moment of his resurrection or his baptism by John: Jesus' conception or birth must also be understood as being *from* God, as a being filled by the Spirit**.** Gradually and increasingly this was further elaborated at a biological, material level. In the apocryphal proto-gospel of James (2nd century)[6] a midwife confirms, after empirical, manual examination, that Mary remained a virgin (one reason why this document is 'apocryphal'). But though

[5] *Literature. Jungfrauengeburt. Gestern und heute* (eds. H. Borsch and J. Hasenfuss) (Essen 1969); R.E. Brown, 'The problem of the virginal conception of Jesus', in ThS 33 (1972), 3-34; G. Delling, sub *parthenos,* in ThWNTV, 824-35; A. George, 'Jésus Fils de Dieu dans l'évangile selon saint Luc', in RB 72 (1965), 185-209, and 'Le parallèle entre Jean-Baptiste et Jésus en Lc. 1-2', in *Melanges Bibliques* (hommage au R.P. B. Rigaux) (Gembloux 1970), 147-171; F. Neyrinck, 'Maria bewaarde al de woorden in haar hart (Lc. 2:19,51)', in CollBrugGand 5 (1959), 433-466; W. Pannenberg, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis* (Hamburg 1972), 78-85; R. Pesch, 'Eine alttestamentliche Ausführungsformel im Mt.-Evangelium', in BZ 10 (1966), 220-45 and 11 (1967), 79-97, and 'Der Gottessohn im matthäischen Evangelienprolog (Mt. 1-2)', in Bibl 48 (1967), 345-420; J. Riedl, *Die Vorgeschichte Jesu* (Stuttgart 1968); G. Schneider, 'Jesu geistgewirkte Empfängnis (Lk. 1:34-35)', in ThPQ 119 (1971), 105-116; H. Schürmann, 'Aufbau, Eingenart und Geschichtswert der Vorgeschichte von Lk. 1-2', in BuK 21 (1966), 106-111; A. Vögtle, 'Das Schickal des Messiaskindes. Zur Auslegung und Theologie von Mt. 2', in BuL 6 (1965), 249-267; *Messias und Gottessohn* (Düsseldorf 1971), and 'Offene Fragen zur Lukanischen Geburts- und Kindheitsgeschichte', in BuL 11 (1970); now in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (Düsseldorf 1971), 43-56; see also 57-102.

[6] Especially 19:1-3 (Hennecke, I, 277-290).

less inclined to stress the historical, material aspect in his infancy narrative, it is clear from the unambiguous Greek grammatical phrase *gennaô ek* (the man being regarded in antiquity as the sole generative principle) that Matthew actually portrays the Holy Spirit operating by analogy with the principle of male generation. Luke, on the other hand, avoids any analogy with this masculine principle; unlike Matthew, he does not speak of 'begetting' (*to gennèthen,* first aorist passive: that is, 'what is begotten by ...'), but of *to gennômenon* (present passive), that is, 'what is born', namely, 'the child' (so that everything is viewed from the mother's point of view; the man's role is disregarded). This locates Matthew in a later stage of an originally reticent tradition which, in the apocrypha issues in empirically ascertainable, biological [555] virginity or a fatherless birth. The original tradition is more reticent in this respect; and the fact that both Matthew and Luke have an angel announce the virgin birth makes it clear (in view of this scriptural stylistic device; cf. the appearance of an angel in the tomb at Jerusalem) that the aim of this tradition is not to impart an empirically verifiable truth or secret information about family history, but a revelational truth. It is a christological interpretation of Jesus imparted by God: this Jesus is holy and Son of God from the very first moment of his human existence: 'because he is truly born of Mary by the power of God's Spirit', 'therefore (*dio kai*) he will be called holy, the Son of God' (Lk. 1:35). It is not that Luke needs the Greek postulate of a virgin birth to substantiate Jesus' sonship from his conception;[7] form criticism has shown that in certain local churches belief in Jesus' virgin birth was a given fact, available to Luke and Matthew. But where does this Christian tradition come from? It is clear from Matthew that the allusion to (the Greek) Is. 7:14 (where the Emmanuel prophecy may be read as an explicit reference to 'a virgin', in contrast to the Hebrew text) is a 'reflection citation', that is, a scriptural proof applied retrospectively to an existing Christian tradition of Jesus' virgin birth. In Lk. 1:26-33, however, the passage from Isaiah is completely integrated with the story − in such a way that the narrative is built on Is. 7:14 (very clear in 1:26-31).

The problem is that the 'born of a virgin' in Is. 7:14 is in no way associated with the Spirit of God, whereas that is the whole point of the interpretation in the gospel. But if the link between Jesus' birth and the Holy Spirit is a divine revelation (an angelic message), it follows that by virtue of the resurrection the 'today' of Ps. 2:7 was first connected with Jesus' sonship and his being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:33), then − because of this same connection between 'sonship' and 'power of the Holy Spirit' – with John's baptism of

[7] Pannenberg's line of argument, l.c. 78-85, completely ignores what form criticism has shown to be the tradition of the virgin birth *inherited by Luke;* his conclusion is scripturally correct, but not his reasoning.

Jesus; finally, in a further religious reflection, it was applied to Jesus' conception and birth as a human being (Matthew and Luke).[8] What was first, as a result of the Easter experience, associated with Jesus' resurrection – he was the Son completely filled with the Spirit − on further reflection shifted to Jesus' baptism by John, and on yet further reflection was affirmed as the actual origin and constitution of his humanity. That is to say, Jesus owed his entire human
[556] existence, his very humanity **t**o the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:35): that is the christological purport of the infancy gospel, although in Luke and still more expressly in Matthew it assumes historical form in a virgin birth − one that is indeed concrete, albeit not empirically ascertainable but accessible only to faith. The connection already perceived between Jesus Christ and his being filled with the Spirit (resurrection; baptism in the Jordan), always associated with Ps. 2:7, was eventually applied to a limited, early Christian tradition which, on the basis of the (Greek) late Judaic interpretation of Is. 7:14, already spoke of the virgin birth of the messiah Jesus.[9]

Even then it still concerns a functional or salvation-historical sonship, not yet an ontological Christology in the Greek sense. It is rather an 'ontological' Christology in a Jewish sense: the purpose of Jesus' entire life from the very beginning was to offer God's salvation; this indeed is the ground of *proskynèsis,* that is, latreutic veneration or cultic worship of Jesus (Mt. 2:11).[10]

(g) Jesus' sonship was also connected with his heavenly pre-existence, at least in a high sapiential sense, which even in the Johannine gospel − compared with the Nicene dogma − could be called a form of low Christology,[11] declaring it a hypostasis in a late Judaic sense. Here the accent is on the Son 'dwelling among us' (Jn. 1:14; 1 Jn. 4:2-3; 2 Jn. 7). Such pre-existence points to God's decree or transcendent, primordial wisdom concerning the historical role of Jesus as mediator between God and man. That is why this wisdom Christology with its late sapiential ambience is already discernible in very old, pre-Pauline hymns; it is certainly not a later phase in New Testament theological reflection – a further reason for seeing it as a late Jewish, sapiential hermeneutic model. Despite the living unity between the Son and the Father, who is greater than the one he sent (Jn. 14:28; 17), John stresses the Son's obedient subordination to the Father: Jesus obtained everything from the Father for the salvation of many (Jn. 3:35; 5:12-23; see 6:40; 10:38; 14:10,12; cf. 1

[8] G. Schneider, *Jesu Empfängnis,* l.c., 113-114.

[9] In particular, Philo, *De Cherubim,* 40-52. See also above (Part Three, messianic son of David), where it was said that in late Judaism, too, the idea of a virgin birth of the messiah was probably already current among Greek-speaking Jews.

[10] R. Pesch, *Der Gottessohn,* l.c., 414.

[11] See above in Part Three. I have been unable to consult the study by R. G. Hammerton-Kelly, *Pre-existence, wisdom and the son of man* (Cambridge 1973), which apparently defends the *ontological* dimension of the Jewish pre-existence.

Jn. 2:22-25; 5:12; 2 Jn. 9). Paul for his part, reacting against both a *theios anèr* Christology of a *deus praesens* clothed in human form and against speculative wisdom Christologies, nevertheless subscribes to pre-existence, which in my view entails − even more plainly than in the Johannine gospel − an explicit incarnation Christology (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3; 1 Cor. 2:7 and 8:6; Phil. 2:6ff; which in no way contradicts the Son's subordination to the Father, 1 Cor. 15:23-28).

Thus three major divergent − at a pre-canonical stage even rival − [557]
interpretations of Jesus' sonship converge in the New Testament; and in the process of their integration in the gospels the original meaning of these three theological reflections was intrinsically altered: (1) Jesus is 'Son of God', 'messiah-ben-David', son of David (his mission to Israel) and 'son of Abraham' (his mission to all peoples) (Matthean genealogy); (2) Jesus is Son of God in a special way by virtue of the resurrection − of the sending of the Spirit at his baptism by John – and of the gift of the Spirit at his conception and birth; (3) Jesus is Son of God in a pre-existent way. All these christological pronouncements are functional in the context of salvation history; but from a Judaeo-Christian standpoint they define the essence of Jesus, especially because the appellations 'Son', 'Christ', 'Lord' are consistently ascribed to him by God (his voice in Scripture, particularly Ps. 2:7) or by his angel or messenger; in other words, it is an interpretation of Jesus from God's point of view, prompted by faith in God: Jesus should be seen as part of God's plan of salvation. This is the Jewish ontology, in which the name and the essential being are determined by God himself. In this ontology the further question − whether Jesus is the Son because he was sent by God for human salvation, or whether he was sent because he is the Son − is nonsensical. Hence there is nothing wrong with saying: 'God sent his Son in order to ...' (Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 8:3-4; Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 4:9). Both a late sapiential Christology and an explicit incarnation Christology in the New Testament assume a salvation-historical ontology, not a Greek but a *Jewish* ontology. Thus Paul is able to take Jesus' sonship for granted and at the same time describe him as 'Son of God in power' (Rom. 1:3-4) only with and after his resurrection: a Jewish existential ontology allows this by definition; it is a dynamic concept of sonship, cognizant of both history and salvation history. After much reflection and in light of the apostles' Easter experience, Jesus' entire life's work and eventually his entire human existence came to be understood as an existence and activity deriving from God. Jesus is from God and for his fellow men, he is God's gift to all people: this is the New Testament's ultimate view, its definition as it were, of Jesus of Nazareth. I reiterate: salvation in Jesus deriving from God (the title I initially intended to give this book, but which can probably only be fully understood after reading it). Human pro-existence (or shared humanity), but proceeding from God and to the honour of God: to that end Jesus was filled

[558] with God's Spirit and his very existence as a man was the work of God's Spirit. Whatever new name (or names) we can and may think up for Jesus, those two aspects will have to be present in them, if we still want to talk about the Jesus of the gospels and hence − with due regard to their remarkable fidelity to the norm and criterion of the earthly Jesus − about the historical Jesus of Nazareth himself.

Section Four

POST-NEW TESTAMENT REFLECTION IN THE EARLY CHURCH: CHRISTOLOGICAL DOGMA

Christians were constantly obliged to explain their creed and identity and [559]
defend these to their opponents: first Aramaic and Greek Jews, then pagans, finally fellow Christians who deviated from what was by now recognized in their own circles as the universal 'apostolic faith'. As a result they were continually refining their definition – the inescapable lot of every faith! But besides this apologetic motive for ongoing reflection, there was a second motive (albeit connected with the first): their own belief gave them reason to ponder (although never detached from the action and reaction of their environment; and that, quite soon, was a gentile environment, with its own mentality and concepts of God).

For a long time the Christians had to differentiate themselves from their environment, that is, define the Christian faith more precisely in the face of objections from their co-religionists, the Jews. In the New Testament what emerges against the common Jewish background is the formulation of the Christian creed, while in the meantime 'the church' was born and the Jewish Christian 'eschatological brotherhood' had seceded from the synagogue. In the post-New Testament period this led to new and fierce controversy with the Jews and ultimately especially with the pagans. Jews attacked both the Christology and ecclesiology of the Christians: on the one hand the Christian affirmation of the divinity of a human being, which they saw as undermining Jewish monotheism, on the other the Christian contention that the church was 'the true Israel'.

Being Jews themselves originally, the last thing the Christians intended was [560]
to support a 'ditheism', a kind of 'two gods' principle: Yahweh and the Lord Jesus. And so these Jewish Christians were faced with the problem of

reconciling their strict Jewish monotheism with their Christian *proskynèsis,* that is, their veneration of Jesus as Lord, Christ and Son, which must be described as unmistakably 'latreutic' acknowledgment of Jesus' divinity. This Christian belief and, above all, the growing church praxis indeed gave them, as pure bred and genuinely religious Jews, cause to think, besides the pressure put on them by the objections of their non-Christian compatriots. On the other hand, the objections voiced by the gentiles (with their whole elitist, Greek philosophical tradition behind them) were sharper and more penetrating and, especially for Christians coming from Greek 'pagandom', dangerously seductive. Origen later showed with razor- sharp astuteness how a Greek like Celsus argued against Christianity: 'If these people [the Christians] know no other God than the One, then they might have a valid argument. . . But in fact they offer public worship [divine worship] to this man who appeared recently, and that is not consistent with their own monotheism.'[1] In other words, veneration of Christ is contrasted with the Christian confession of the one true God, which is exposed as an inherent contradiction. Either the Christians are guilty of offering divine worship to a man − of whom everyone knows that he was still living among us not so long ago − in which case they forsake what even for Greeks at that time was the only meaningful form of transcendent monotheism; or else Christian theory and practice are in total contradiction. These Greeks, who had long before abandoned the *theios anèr* theology as a myth and were emphasizing God's transcendence and unapproachable majesty, saw the confession of Christ as an impugnment of God's inaccessible sublimity. At first these cutting objections[2] compelled the Christians to adopt all sorts of complicated defensive constructions. Either they proceeded in their theory to dilute the divinity of Jesus − confessed in public prayer − and this gave rise to what is known historically as dynamic monarchianism, that is to say, there is but one *Archè,* a universal 'Cause', namely God (monotheism in terms of *archè*); Jesus, on the other hand, was a person equipped with the special *dunamis* or power of this God (Theodotus of Byzantium; Paul of Samosata, who objected to the practice of praying to Jesus instead of to God the Father, through Jesus Christ). Or else they were obliged to deny the

[1] Origen, *Contra Celsum,* 1:26 and 8:12; 4:3.

[2] For the significance of Greek thought in patristics see P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne. Étude sur la polémique anti-chrétienne du Ie au VIe siècle* (Paris 1942²); M. Wiles, *The making of Christian doctrine* (Cambridge 1967); G.L. Prestige, *God in patristic thought* (London 1956), and *Fathers and heretics* (London 1968); J. Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité,* 2 vols (Paris 1927); Ph. Merlan, *Greek philosophy from Plato to Plotinus* (Cambridge 1967); J.E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the early church* (Cambridge 1970); J. Danielou, *Théologie du judéo-christianisme* (Paris 1958), and *Message évangélique et culture hellénistique aux IIe et IIIe siècles* (Tournai 1961); W. Pannenberg, 'Die Aufnahme des philosophischen Gottesbegriffes als dogmatisches Problem der frühchristlichen Theologie', in *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie* (Göttingen 1967), 296-346; W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen 1963²).

distinction between Jesus and the Father, resulting in what is known as 'modalist monarchianism', that is, Jesus as Son of God is an alternative mode [561] of being of the Father himself (*Noëtus*). This latter view went down better with the Christians, who saw in it a theological justification for their devotion to Christ. Thus these two christological strands resulted from the conflict between Christian belief and Greek thought, a conflict that worked itself out partly in the thinking of Greeks who were also Christians. Celsus's objection led Origen to accept two distinct existences in God (Father and Son), unified nonetheless through unity of will. In answer to the objection that this concept was unworthy of God's majesty − Origen was himself a Greek and felt the force of these objections in his very bones − he tried to preserve God's transcendence by saying that of course the (Greek) 'unchanging God' was not affected by psychological experiences in Jesus' humanity − in soul or body.[3] This was a purely apologetic argument, intelligible only in the framework of the questions and objections actually raised. In due course, however, the inquiry in which his answer functioned was abandoned; and Origen's reply became an independent christological affirmation, which took on a life of its own and from which yet further conclusions were drawn.

There is more to it. As intellectuals these Greeks, understandably, wanted to make the Christian creed intelligible to Greek minds. They sought a shared basis for dialogue between Christians and Greeks in the belief in the one true God. Just as Israel's God, Yahweh, was the common basis on which Jews and Jewish Christians were able to conduct their controversy, so the Greek philosophical concept of God was considered to be common ground for discussion between Christians and (Hellenistic) pagans. The Pythagoreans, Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics became allies of Christianity, of that monotheism which the Christians also professed. This patristic attempt to express the original Christian inspiration in the terms of a Greek hermeneutic horizon has evoked fierce criticism, especially in our own day. But – in view of the Christian amendment to the Greek hermeneutic horizon − this critique of Greek patristics has a shaky foundation and can hardly be called scientific. Contrasting biblical thinking with Greek thought is fashionable in some circles, almost mandatory; but structuralist depth-analyses of the Hebrew and Greek languages have exposed many of the so-called typical fundamental differences as ideological 'prejudice' without sound argumentation. No one would deny the difficulty of harmonizing the Old Testament prophetic concept of God with [562] the Greeks' dispassionate *Dens immutabilis,* who created the world 'furtively', with no further concern or personal love for mankind − the all but mathematical point, alpha and omega of all that exists, self-sufficiently

[3] Origen, *Contra Celsum,* 4, 5; 4, 14-15.

introverted (God as *noèsis noèseôs*). That is to reduce the Greek worldview to pure abstraction, which is alien to living Hellenism.

The Greek ideal of *paideia* or education was to attain to true humanity and freedom. *Paideia* means doctrine of release or liberation.[4] For the Greeks the crux of true humanity was truth, not success. Hence one had to find criteria, a norm and paradigm to measure humanity and freedom. In this search Hellenism adopted two approaches: the Dionysian and the Apollonian. Early Greek religiosity (and poetry) struggled to bridge the chasm between God and man: 'Seek not to become as Zeus' (Pindar), for God and man are 'of different stock' contrasts with what Aeschylus in his Prometheus myth was to call *suggeneia,* the affinity between God and man, which the Stoics developed into 'We are of God's lineage' (Aratos; see Acts 17:28). In other words, Hellenism oscillated between two ideals: 'Man is the measure of all things' (Protagoras), and 'God is the measure of all things' (Plato). On the one hand it meant recognizing the limits of humanity, not requiring too much of it; on the other it meant not ascribing jealousy to God, man is permitted to transcend himself. These two currents in Greek life and thought came together: man may become like God; that conformity is what true humanity, liberation and freedom are about.

In looking for a normative model for educating men the Greeks initially had difficulty locating a prototype that would show man the way in our earthly, empirical world: it was the domain of fleeting occurrences (*panta rhei*). The *phusis* (nature) or essence (*ousia*) of things must lie elsewhere. Greek (especially Platonic) thought found this model in 'the world of the divine', a transcendent reality on which the innermost essence of this mundane world is modelled. Thus the goal and purpose of the education or liberation of mankind was *mimesis,* imitation of this normative, divine paradigm. Thus we may participate in the divine, free from all that is unworthy of man: liberated freedom is the goal of all *paideia.* Becoming like God is a humanizing process: it is truly to become man. The tarnished 'image of God' is restored through man's
[563] conformity to the example of the divine paradigm. 'Imitation of God' (later called divinization) is therefore an ethical task to realize both the right relationship with other human beings (*dikaiosune* or righteousness) and with God (*eusebèia* or piety). Thus human divinization is a humanizing task: free human beings in a justly ordered *polis* or political community mirroring the divine world.

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[4] See especially W. Jäger, *Paideia,* 3 vols (Berlin 1934, 1944 and 1947); M. Pohlenz, *Der hellenistische Mensch* (Göttingen 1947), and *Die Stoa* (Göttingen 1964[3]); D. Nestlé, *Eleutheria,* I (Tübingen 1967); A. Festugière, *L'Idéal religieux des Grecs et l'évangile* (Paris 1932[2]); *L'Enfant d'Agrigente* (Paris 1950[2]), and his standard work *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste,* 4 vols (Paris 1944-54); see also H. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris 1948), and U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Der Glaube der Hellenen,* 3 vols (Darmstadt 1959[3]).

This liberation or deliverance of mankind is a hard struggle, in which man cannot free himself. He is a prisoner in the cave. 'Philosophers' sent by God are needed − 'wise educators' or 'political liberators' who, advantaged by their knowledge of the prototype, are able to point the right way to true humanity or likeness to God. Deliverance means following the directions and stimuli to be found in nature, in history, in the example of wise men. It is obtained through 'revelation' of true knowledge. That is why Hellenism has often been accused − and in a sense justly − of one-sided intellectualism. Yet we often misinterpret it, for the Greek *nous* (intellectual faculty) embraces intellect and will − which is why the Roman Cicero translates *nous* as *ratio et voluntas*.[5] Greek knowledge is *aretè,* virtue, theory and practice all in one. It is not neutral knowing but knowledge gained in the progressive liberation process of *paideia*; as a mediatory process true knowledge opens up *values,* to which man in his innermost being as *imago Dei* man directs his longing. Thus knowledge is a vitalizing power. For Greeks grace is not so much inward grace but a signpost in nature and history; by means of external stimuli the inner *imago Dei,* dulled by ignorance and sinfulness, is re-energized and roused so that it once again becomes itself and can assert its intrinsic energy.

This splendid concept of *paideia* was taken up but also radically modified by the Stoics and the folk philosophy of Hellenism. For meanwhile Aristotle had subjected Platonic dualism to searching criticism and had located 'ideas' in our experiential world. According to the Stoics the paradigm of true humanity is to be found in the world, in the divine Logos who permeates the whole world of man and matter from within and dwells in each one of us. Hence God's reign is realized in 'living according to nature', according to reason, according to Logos. Nature and history are a single, grand 'epiphany' of the Logos, which is meant to educate man to authentic humanity. In sages and political saviours [564] this noble pedagogy of the Logos is condensed and reaches its zenith. 'Naturalization', humanization and divinization are one and the same thing. That is how the *imago Dei* in man is released and man becomes truly human. Notwithstanding this ideal of the 'imitation of God' the Greeks never quite forgot their earliest Homeric and Pindaric tradition: the human condition. Remarkably, the Roman Stoics rendered the Greek ideal of *paideia* (being raised to divinity) with the Latin word *humanitas.*

The Greek church fathers lived as Christians within this Greek cultural system. Just as in earlier times Jews who had found ultimate salvation in Jesus had expressed salvation in their own religio-cultural hermeneutic horizon as God's salvific action in Jewish history and the perspective thus opened up on

[5] P. Stockmeier, *Glaube und Religion in der frühen Kirche* (Freiburg 1972), 137, n. 17. Also Festugiere, *L'Idéal religieux,* 56.

eschatological figures of salvation (end-time prophet, messianic son of David, son of man), so in the patristic writings (from the apostolic fathers and apologists onwards) Greek Christians proceeded to express the salvation they had found in Jesus in terms of the Greek *paideia* concept: *paideia Christou* (1 Clem. 21:8). God's pedagogy of salvation via nature and history reached supreme concentration in Jesus Christ: he is at once paradigm and imitation, the primal image in which the tarnished *imago Dei,* man, is restored.[6] The progressive pedagogic process of man's liberation triggered by natural and historical events reaches its zenith in Jesus Christ: he is the educator and teacher who brings true knowledge, 'so that through our imitation of what he did and obedience to his sayings we might have fellowship with him', says Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. V, 1:1). By this means man is snatched from death, from mortality and the power of sin, and taken up into living fellowship with God. This gave rise to the saying (especially among the Alexandrians and Cappadocians): if Christ were not God, he would be unable, in exchange for the human nature which he received from us, to transform our fallen nature into divinity; or: God became man so that man should be divinized.[7] Thus patristics adopted the Hellenistic *paideia* notion, re-evaluating it in a Christian perspective and christianizing it, thanks to its personalized God concept and consequent emphasis on divine freedom.

On the basis of the salvation brought by Jesus, patristic thought set out to define more accurately the person of the one who brings it. In this 'conjunctural framework' (for this idea see Part Four) the Councils of Nicea,

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[6] *Fundamental literature.* W. Jäger, *Das frühe Christentum und die griechische Bildung* (Berlin 1963); H. Niederstraszer, *Kerygma und Paideia* (Stuttgart 1967); S. Otto, *'Natura' und 'dispositio'* (Munich 1960); G. Greshake, *Gnade als konkrete Freiheit. Eine Untersuchung zur Gnadenlehre des Pelagius* (Mainz 1972); P. Stockmeier, 'Glaube und Paideia', in ThQ 147 (1967), 432-452, and *Glaube und Religion in der frühen Kirche* (Freiburg 1973); A. Heitmann, *Imitatio Dei* (Rome 1940); P. Schwanz, *Imago Dei* (Halle 1970); M. Lot-Borodine, *La déification de l'homme selon les doctrines des Pères Grecs* (Paris 1970); J. Meyendorff, *Le Christ dans la théologie byzantine* (Paris 1969). Finally, the by now outdated but still informative book J. Gross, *La divinisation du chrétien d'après les Pères Grecs* (Paris 1938).

[7] E.g. Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus,* Ass. 1; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 5, pref.; Athanasius, *De incarnatione,* 54, etc. This patristic principle is based on two Greek premises: (a) the reprieve or pardon is envisaged as *'theopoièsis',* in the sense of *'homoiôsis Theou',* and (b) *'quod non est assumptum, non est sanatum',* that which has not been subsumed in Jesus' human nature is also not redeemed. This last principle in particular is based on the Greek realism of the *'universalia':* in the *'natura humana'* of Jesus, all human beings are included as an almost physical reality (something we can hardly 'experience' now). Fundamentally, therefore, all human beings are already redeemed through the contact of human nature with the divine nature in Christ. It has more to do with 'human nature' than with the human individual. Yet, albeit with the aid of this Greek model, the Greek Fathers do intend to express the biblical idea of the 'vicarious' action of Jesus. Deification on the basis of Jesus' being-as-man still remains Greek: that is, a coming to the invisible Father by way of *knowledge*, as Athanasius makes explicit in the celebrated adage (*De incarnatione,* 54): in the man Jesus, the 'divine paradigm' becomes *visible* in a human, imitable form. In other words, Christ is an 'exemplar'; his life was a living demonstration of what we have to 'imitate'. From an anthropological standpoint this does indeed serve to 'demythologize' the 'divinizing process'. It is in fact 'humanizing' based on a divine model: sanctity.

Ephesus, Constantinople and Chalcedon intended to safeguard the basic 'first-order' creed (decisive salvation in Jesus given by God) at the level of 'second-order' affirmations. In keeping with the Greek inquiry in terms of *ousia* and *phusis* they wanted to secure God's salvation pedagogy in Christ: on the one hand, God and God alone is the source of total human salvation, deliverance and liberation; on the other, the locus where this release and salvation are realized is the historical human being caught up in the events of the cosmos. So Jesus has to be simultaneously *idea paradeigma* and *eikôn mimèma*: both primal image and supreme realization of imitation by consistently actualizing the *imago Dei* − at once God and man. In short: 'one and the same' (Chalcedon) must be wholly 'on God's side' (otherwise he is not a paradigm) − in terms of Greek *ousia* this implies 'consubstantial with the Father', that is, 'true God'; on the other, he has to be wholly 'on man's side' (as the supreme, successful *eikôn* of humanity, in which he is a paradigm for us), that is, 'true man'. The Hellenistic identity between 'divinizing' and 'humanizing' was concretized in the person of Jesus Christ. There, transposed into Greek *ousia* terms, we have the fundamental inspiration of the whole New Testament: salvation in Jesus, but coming from God. In the not indispensable but historically given hermeneutic horizon of the Greek concept of *paideia* it clearly reflects the gospel message. The precision and meaning of the New Testament 'first-order' affirmation (salvation in Jesus, imparted by God), which guided and governed christological thinking over the centuries of dogma formation, could only be preserved (once the problem had been identified as the *ousia* of all that exists: what ultimately is Jesus?) in a 'second-order' profession. It did so in the same way as Chalcedon eventually did: by correcting the one-sidedness of Nicea (one-sided in its failure to define what had nevertheless been presupposed). [565]

It is an eye-opener to research, amid all the philosophical subtleties of these Greek minds that were also Christian, what eventually determined their conciliar conclusion. It was not their philosophy, but the church's tradition of devotion to Christ. The heretical alternatives in fact proceeded on the same principle: salvation from God given in the man Jesus. After all, they too were believing Christians. Like the 'orthodox' they – being Greeks of the middle Platonic school − maintained that God's transcendence is so exalted and 'wholly other' that his contact with the human world − in creation and redemption – required an intermediary, the demiurge or Logos, between God and what takes place outside of God. In the end, under pressure of their Christian creed, the 'orthodox' broke free from this philosophy and gave up middle Platonism,[8] whereas their opponents clung to its logical consequence. It [566]

[8] Fr. Ricken, 'Das Homoousios von Nikaia als Krisis des altchristlichen Platonismus', in H. Schlier et al., *Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie* (Quaest. Disp., 51) (Freiburg 1970), 74-99; see also H.-J. Vogt, 'Politische Erfahrung als Quelle des Gottesbildes bei Kaiser Konstantin der Grosse', in *Dogma*

can be demonstrated historically that the church's eventual repudiation of middle Platonism − its de-Hellenization − was actually prompted by Christian belief. This does not mean that scriptural arguments were decisive; both parties found their cherished arguments in various texts in Scripture, which lent itself to all sorts of manipulation. Scriptural proofs seem to have been purely illustrative.[9] The main argument was not the official liturgical worship (which was to be decisive regarding the later dogma of the Holy Spirit), since in pre-Nicean liturgy prayers were addressed only to the Father, albeit 'through Christ our Lord'. It was in fact worship of Christ as practised by many of the faithful, who had adopted the habit of 'praying to Jesus', and not just to the Father 'in and through Jesus' as in the official liturgy. Accordingly the bishops at Nicea were prepared to surrender the supposed logic of middle Platonism; what is more, they came to the conclusion that middle Platonism was philosophically untenable; and so, unlike Arius, they would not allow the logic immanent in this system to have the last word. Thus they rejected what had once been their own philosophy! In the religious practice of praying to Jesus salvation in Jesus given by God was interpreted in the perspective of Jesus' true divinity. The Council fathers allowed this Christian devotional practice to preponderate over philosophical thought and as a result the church abandoned middle Platonism which had occupied theologians for two centuries.[10] Although the *ousia* philosophy may have been the hermeneutic horizon in which the christological dogma took shape, we must not underestimate the crucial impact of the Christ mystique as a living reality in Christian prayer (even though it was a recent practice prior to the Nicene dogma).[11] In Jesus God himself is on our side: that, after all, is the gist of the Nicene dogma, which affirms the consubstantiality of the man Jesus with the Father. The Council of Chalcedon, intent on stressing Jesus' true humanity, said that this man was wholly on God's side. Thus Nicea emphasizes salvation
[567] coming from God (albeit communicated in Jesus); Chalcedon, on the other hand, emphasizes salvation in Jesus (but coming from God). Both assertions

und Politik (Mainz 1973), 35-61.

[9] Wiles, *The Making,* l.c., 41-61.

[10] Ricken, *Das Homoousios,* l.c., seems to me to be correct in the end result, but wrong in attributing this 'breakthrough' of Middle Platonism purely to'theological thinking'. This breakthrough in thinking was at the same time a reflecting on a concrete experience of piety and devotion; see Wiles, *The making,* l.c., 62-93; J. Lebreton, 'Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'église chrétienne du IIIe siècle', in RHE 19 (1923), 481-506 and 20 (1924), 5-37. Discrepancy between the teaching of the church and the faith of its members is as old as the church itself.

[11] A similar situation occurred with the definition of the Roman Catholic dogma of Mary's immaculate conception. Against all the resistance offered by the theologians this piece of popular piety persisted until Scotus, under pressure, found a theological concept capable of reconciling this piety with the theological affirmation of *universal* sinfulness (namely redemption 'by prevention' or being excepted from sin). Only then did academic theology also submit to it.

focus on the one undivided Jesus Christ. The Greco-Christian idea of God is expressed in the familiar patristic notion of God, which breaks with the Hellenistic concept and grafts it onto the ancient Judaeo-Christian tradition: *Theos pros hèmas,* a God of men, turning to us in Jesus Christ. I have no problem with any of this in the Greek hermeneutic framework and the questions it raised at that time: it is unadulterated gospel; yet in terms of a philosophical hermeneutics which no longer accords with ours in every respect it certainly presents some difficulties today.

Although originally inspired by Greek patristics, Latin patristic theology worked out the Greek Christological insights − redemption is the restoration of God's image through *paideia* – in an Afro-Roman experiential and hermeneutic horizon. In many respects it differed radically from the Greek experience of life and conception of history. The Romans were less concerned about a grand view of history than about the actual conduct of individual and socio-political life. They modelled their ideal pattern on the Greek view, centring on orthopraxis governed by the norm of 'nature' or 'the Logos'. The Roman Stoics (Cicero and Seneca) found in the Greek Stoics an analysis of their own specifically Latin, Punic-Roman sense of justice. To them the Greek concept of *paideia* was a legal order integrated with the cosmic order, the expression of divine justice.[12] Divine justice takes the place of the Greek *paideia* or divine salvation pedagogy. Thus their thinking has a marked anthropological slant. Instead of the Greek 'paradigm' and its representations they used the categories of a legal order, its disruption and restoration; in other words, not an ontology of the cosmological/pedagogical order of 'primal image' and 'representation', but the ontological relation between a pure system of justice and its historical violation. Every breach of this order calls for a sanction and reparation so as to restore the relationships thus infringed. Even more than Greek Christianity, then, Latin patristics stressed the contribution of human freedom to the process of redemption. From the Latin point of view the honour of the human subject was at stake. Salvation that descended on man from outside, like alms tossed to a beggar, conflicted with the Roman sense of justice; the beggar must stand on his own feet. Later Anselm was to spell out this [568] Roman sense of justice when he had the Son say to the sinner: 'Take me, and save yourself.'[13] To Anselm this requirement of the legal order, insisting that

[12] See A. Schindler, 'Gnade und Freiheit. Zum Vergleich zwischen den griechischen und lateinischen Kirchenvätern', in ZThK 62 (1965), 178-195; N. Brox, 'Soteria und Salus', in EvTh 33 (1973), 253-279; J- Plagnieux, *Heil und Heiland. Dogmengeschichtliche Texte und Studien* (Paris 1969); R. Haubst, 'Anselms Satisfaktionslehre einst und heute', in TrThZ 80 (1971), 88-109; Greshake, *Gnade als konkrete Freiheit,* 193-274.

[13] *Cur Deus homo?,* II, 20. Elsewhere: *'Oportet ut, si idem genus (humanum) resurgit post casum, per se resurgat'* (l.c., II, 8). The Latin way of viewing redemption as restoration of the damaged legal order had a twofold consequence: (a) on the one hand it sharpened the distinction between 'justification'

the proper value of human freedom is not overridden by God's omnipotence, is the supreme expression of God's compassion, who not only grants man salvation and forgiveness out of his own goodness, but who in and through this free gift declines to infringe or mortify man's freedom and dignity: man is permitted to save himself. This is the distinctive Latin view of salvation from God. To this end Jesus, our fellow man, is given to us. Modern evaluations of this Western doctrine of satisfaction – worked out in particular by Anselm, but in essence much older – have often caricatured it in a way that disregards Anselm's real intention and Western sensibilities**.** Essentially Anselm's concern as a Christian is with God's honour, but in his satisfaction doctrine he is concerned primarily with the honour of man, the *dignitas humanitatis* (a slogan of the burgeoning humanism of Anselm's time):[14] man honours God by sorting himself out. Making satisfaction means restoring the order where it had been infringed, namely in man himself. Thus Anselm envisaged salvation as a legal process involving God and man. In contrast to Greek patristic thought with its metaphysical and cosmological, universal, divine pedagogy of salvation (in which ultimately 'grace is everything') the Romans put human subjectivity at the centre. Redemption must be an authentic happening worthy of man − not an overwhelming gesture of divine omnipotence. This doctrine already reveals something of what strikes a modern mind as an issue of redemption and emancipation, one which actually could only arise in Western culture.

Just as Greek patristics identified Jesus in terms of both elements of redemption − paradigm and *mimèma,* primal image and imitation − so Latin patristics identified the person of Jesus with the salvation he brought: *'totus in suis, totus in nostris'* (Leo the Great, *Tomus ad Flavianum*): only God can bring salvation, and do so without violating man's freedom. In and through human freedom divine salvation is procured. Both are realized in Jesus, the 'God-man'. In terms of their legal hermeneutic framework, therefore, the Romans had no problem with the dogma of Chalcedon: it preserved human freedom and dignity intact. From a Roman viewpoint God's honour and human honour could never conflict. Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction is a doctrine about God's
[569] supreme compassion with man; it does not mean 'making satisfaction to God'

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and 'sanctification' to a greater extent than did the more dynamic Greek patristic idea of redemption, based on a progressive process of liberation; and (b) it also sharpened the distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective redemption': in and through Jesus Christ the order of law and justice is indeed restored; but now the individual freedom of each person must, by the power of Jesus' merits, be squared with the concrete 'I', thus putting matters 'in good order'. Nor must any person's individual freedom be overridden by the saving work of Christ: each person must, in the power of Jesus' merits, stand on his own feet and 'find his place' in the right order of things.

[14] See M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie au douzième siècle* (Paris 1957). In Greek patristics Jesus' humanity was much more an *'organon'* or *'instrumentum Deitatis'*; God was the active subject. Without denying that, Western soteriology puts the stress on man as the active center of instrumentality in the redemptive process.

to the last penny. According to Anselm God only takes pleasure in the man who freely raises himself out of his tarnished state; in Jesus Christ he gives the prerequisite and the power to do so. So the satisfaction doctrine really introduces a new element into human liberation history: the *dignitas humana* and its freedom, in no way denied by Greek patristic theology but never given the same emphasis as in the West with its special penchant for freedom. Salvation, although a gratuitous gift of God, must happen in the larger history of man's self-liberation. Rooted in its own experiential and hermeneutic horizon, this was the distinctive contribution of the Latin West to articulating the decisive and definitive salvation found in Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

For us, patristic Christology (leaving aside any unsubstantiated interpretation of both Greek and Western Christology) only becomes problematic when the (in fact non-dogmatic) neo-Chalcedonian tradition began to speak of an *anhypostasis:* that is, the man Jesus is no human person (something the dogma of Chalcedon never said; it speaks only of 'one person'), but solely a divine person with a 'human' and a 'divine nature'.[15] At the very least it intimated that Jesus lacked some quality of full, authentic humanity. That seems to overstate his 'consubstantiality' with' the Father (in almost monophysite fashion) at the expense of his true humanity. Jesus is thus lifted, as it were, above and beyond our humanity: our shared humanity − a man like us, except for sin – is ontologically restricted. This was bound to evoke a reaction.

The Middle Ages, to which only bits and pieces of these patristic conciliar documents were available, were in fact obliged to conduct all over again − in their own way − the struggle that had marked the whole development of patristic Christology, with more or less the same pitfalls and almost the same twofold result: on the one hand tending towards the *unio secundum hypostasin* (hypostatic union; one person, who is Logos, God and man), on the other towards the *homo assumptus* doctrine. They − at any rate the schools of Bonaventure and Thomas – had an advantage over the neo-Chalcedonian position in that their doctrine − highly abstract as it was − narrowed personhood down to a single entity, in other words one cannot simultaneously be two persons. Thus Thomas Aquinas said that by reason of his divine [570] sonship within the Trinity Jesus Christ was 'personally God (the Son)' as well as 'personally man'.[16] By medieval lights − though raising questions for us –

[15] See the well-known survey in A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon,* 3 vols (Würzburg 1951-1954) (1959², 1962³); also J. Liébaert, *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte,* III-1a (Freiburg 1965); P. Smulders, 'Dogmengeschichtliche und lehramtliche Entfaltung der Christologie', in *Mysterium Salutis* (eds J. Feiner and M. Löhrer) vol. III-1, (Einsiedeln 1970), 389-476.

[16] 'Verbum caro factum est, i.e. homo, quasi [=ita ut] ipsum Verbum *personaliter* sit *homo' (Q.D. de unione Verbi Incarnati,* art. 1.). St. Augustine said: 'Nec sic assumptus est ut prius creatus post assumeretur, sed ut ipsa assumptione crearetur' *(Contra sermonem Arianorum,* 8, 6: 'ipsa

this meant denying that Christ lacked anything that the definition of a human being implies. Cajetan, his subtle disciple, put it − for that time − even more daringly: 'this man means − also in Jesus' case − simply: this human being'.[17] But for the purpose of this book it seems unnecessary, even if instructive, to probe the christological discussions of the Middle Ages and what later issued from them in the way of Scotist and Thomist interpretations of Jesus (right up to modern Christology between the two world wars), for this further history merely tried, for better or for worse, to resolve new impasses using the same old models: no new model emerged.

Conclusion of Part Three and definition of the problem

Parts Two and Three may – rightly – create the impression that the New Testament presents a 'Christology from below'; that is, it sets out from the encounter with and recollection of Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet of the imminent approach of God's reign and the praxis of his kingdom, who turns our human way of life upside down and thus triggers explosive situations: Jesus, who takes an adversarial stand only when people's ideas or conduct conflict with the praxis of the kingdom of God. The New Testament recognizes Jesus as the eschatological messenger of joy, who after his death was vindicated by God.

But they also make us realize that the New Testament and later interpretations of Jesus all arose in a specific experiential and hermeneutic horizon, and as such are historically contingent and not necessarily the context in which christological belief in Jesus must be viewed.

That is not all. From the Council of Nicea onwards a particular christological model − the Johannine one − was developed as a strictly circumscribed norm and was actually the only tradition that made history in the Christian churches. Consequently history has never done justice to the possibilities inherent in the synoptic model; its distinctive dynamics was arrested and the model relegated to the 'forgotten truths' of Christianity. Even though our own
[571] time is not linked with some pre-Nicene Christologies by a continuous intervening tradition, nevertheless there are factors in our cultural and social experience that raise pertinent questions about the dominant Nicene

assumptione creatur').

[17] 'Hypostasis enim Verbi Dei in quantum est hic homo, per naturam humanam hanc constituitur... Quod est dicere personam Verbi constitui in hoc quod est esse *personam humanam;* hic enim homo *personam humanam* significat' (Cajetan, *In III partem Summae Theologiae,* q. 2, a. 5, n. II, ed. Leonina, p. 35 A-B). These astute arguments, then, are meant on the one hand to deny 'two persons' in Jesus, and on the other to affirm the reality of Jesus' human personalism as well, albeit by virtue of the divine person *and on the basis of* his humanity (human nature). Actually Cajetan, no more than Scotus, wants to speak of any deprivation of human being; both accept the human personalism of Jesus; they differ only on the definition of what precisely constitutes a person. Thomas had said: 'non minuit sed auget' *(Summa Theologiae,* III, q. 2, a. 5, ad 1).

Christology and open up perspectives which offer a glimpse of pre-Nicene possibilities.

To go back in time to the crossroads and adopt the other, alternative route is hermeneutically and historically impossible, quite apart from the dogmatic dubiousness of such an attempt at restoration. We cannot undo history. We can, however, examine why, at the parting of the ways on the eve of Nicea, this Council settled for the one road and not the other, which, given the situation, at the time, it could not take. In the process it may become clear how – unintentionally but in effect – some christological perspectives got pushed into the background by concentrating on the Johannine one. In the long run the one-sided choice led to aporias which, the path once taken, proved difficult to resolve. That calls for renewed, critical reflection on pre-Nicene trends that will help to undo, not the historical choice, but its one-sided emphasis and its silence regarding complementary, essential aspects. It would permit a renewal of Christology in a new experiential and hermeneutic horizon, which still centres on definitive and ultimate salvation in Jesus, imparted by God.

I don't think that the theologian needs to find new models, or in his own right (formally, as a theologian) can find any. His task is to collate, seriously and responsibly, elements which may lead to a new, authentic 'disclosure' or source experience. For without this disclosure or discovery *experience*, finding a possible new model strikes me as a somewhat noncommittal, feeble christological exercise − whereas a *genuine* source experience (one that sees unfathomable depths disclosed in historically observable data) spontaneously evokes its own models. Theology can assist in this, opening up a possible route by shedding light on the way Christians over the ages up to today have arrived at such a source experience of Jesus of Nazareth; by the same token the theologian himself − formally as a believer (and fellow believer) − may arrive at a 'disclosure' and perhaps make it meaningful and accessible to others. Part Four is no more than a prolegomenon to such an enterprise.

Part Four

WHO DO WE SAY THAT HE IS?

Section One

THE PRESENT CHRISTOLOGICAL CRISIS AND ITS PRESUPPOSITIONS

Introduction

In Part One we said that our relation to the ever new present co-determines [575]
our articulation of the substance or content of faith in Jesus as the Christ. This has far-reaching consequences. If Christianity does have universal significance, we are faced with a paradox: on the one hand Christianity would transcend every historical definition of what one may call its essence; on the other, its essence can only be found in specific historical embodiments. Identifying the essence of Christianity exclusively with one of its historical manifestations or one particular definition would be impossible. That is the unavoidable consequence of assigning Jesus Christ 'universal significance'.

It follows that Christianity only remains alive and real if each successive period professes Jesus of Nazareth anew in terms of its own relationship with him. That makes it impossible '*first*' to determine the essence of the Christian faith and subsequently − in the second instance, as it were − to adapt the interpretation to our own time. Those who, along with the Christian churches, affirm the universal significance of belief in Jesus must humbly and loyally shoulder the attendant difficulties as well − or else surrender the claim to universality. Those are the only genuine, consistent possibilities. To accept the universality but deny the hermeneutic problem – thus positing a single, exclusive definition, *ne varietur,* of essential Christianity − is neither an accessible road nor an authentic possibility; it is to disregard and erode the true universality of the Christian faith.

All the same one cannot turn Christianity into whatever one might wish! An authentic Christianity, true to Jesus' message, life and death, must be realized [576]
and articulated in the variable, shifting dimensions of history. A mere appeal to practical conduct or 'orthopraxis' in the sense of praxis of the kingdom of God in itself offers no solution, for the essential nature of God's reign as embodied for us in Jesus is at issue. Orthopraxis, a right course of action, is

only feasible if one understands the point at issue. Of course, we can never finally and fully express the absolute as manifested in Jesus Christ. The next generation will have to take over the task: explain what it means in terms of its longer experience of history and actualize it in the still open future. We can only speak from our own perspective in 1973, albeit with a view to an anticipated future. After us the story will go on, but as the story of Jesus of Nazareth, the definitive meaning of which will only become apparent eschatologically. Meanwhile some provisional verifications are possible.

Chapter 1

‘CONJUNCTURAL’ HERMENEUTIC HORIZON AND A-SYNCHRONOUS RHYTHM IN THE COMPLEX TRANSFORMATION OF A CULTURE

It is often said that we live in a period of radical intellectual and cultural transformation. Our world and our hermeneutic horizon have changed. That is true. Yet we are well advised to situate this transformation more accurately and especially to qualify it, for every cultural revolution (even if it involves our entire philosophy and all experience) is still in some respects relative. After all, we are able to grasp ideas and images of the world and of man that strike us as archaic, just as we can understand foreign languages and cultures; thus at the human level fundamental communication is possible between what are for people (or human cultures) on both sides the strangest symbols, traces and expressions of human life (see below). Foreign hermeneutic and experiential horizons are never entirely foreign to us. What are the conditions for such communication?

French cultural critics[1] in particular have realized that even quite radical [577]
cultural revolutions do not entail synchronous development in every sector at the same pace and rhythm. Whereas all sectors of human life share in the process of cultural transformation – thinking, society, the economy, politics, art, fashion and the like − the rhythm varies. Each historical process occurs on at least three planes, but they do not run parallel: they encompass and interpenetrate one another, and together constitute the history of mankind. There is ‘factual’ or ‘ephemeral’ history with its brief duration and fast rhythm: everyday events come and go; there is ‘conjunctural’ history, which is more

[1] See e.g. F. Braudel, *Écrits sur l’histoire* (Paris 1969); F. Furet, ‘Histoire quantitative et la construction du fait historique’, in *Annales d’Economie, Societé et Civilisation* (1971) (January - February); P. Chaunu, ‘L’histoire sérielle. Bilan et perspectives’, in *Revue Historique* (1970) (April - June).

expansive, has a more profound impact and is more comprehensive, but proceeds at a much slower tempo − in other words, a cultural conjuncture lasts a long time; lastly there is 'structural' history with a timespan of many centuries, verging on the zero point between motion and immobility, albeit not a-historical. 'Structural history', around which conjunctural and factual histories circle like concentric orbits round a slow-moving axis, is situated between these two as a kind of invariable: a spinning but stationary top around which everything else revolves either rapidly or sluggishly. Other cultural analysts have shown that, even after a successful socio-political revolution, eighty per cent of the old, rejected structures 'recur' in one way or another. After all, on the third plane the change process is extremely slow and cumbersome; basic structures survive even the most radical revolutions. The older hypothesis that a mental or material revolution triggers convergent and synchronous development in all cultural sectors, then, turns out to be wrong − a myth.

This insight can help us with our problem. For what is true of culture as a whole applies also to sub-sectors and cultural vectors, including human thinking (hence religious thought). Here we recognize the same three intrinsically interconnected but non-synchronous segments. In the evolving intellectual (and religious) life of mankind we find, circling round an all but stationary depth element which we have called structural, the somewhat faster moving circle of conjunctural thought and, on the outer periphery of these concentric circles, the fleeting thoughts of every passing day with their often 'modish' aspects. I would situate what has been called the 'epochal
[578] hermeneutic horizon',[2] or thought in terms of the hermeneutic models of a specific period[3] or a contemporary experiential horizon, on the second plane of history. In other words, the experiential and hermeneutic horizon conditioned by the spirit of the age belongs to conjunctural history: it goes deeper and is more stable than fleeting day-to-day thoughts and experience; a given hermeneutic horizon persists throughout an epoch. Even so, it is less stable, more 'superficial', than the structural depth elements of human thought. A cultural revolution in experiential and hermeneutic models happens within all but stationary, enduring structures of human thought. We must remember that even in that sector the three planes of a-synchrony do not run parallel and are

[2] This terminology frequently used, for instance, by K. Rahner and J.-B. **{Query surname? MM}** and analysed by B. Welte, 'Die Lehrformel von Nikaia und die Abendländische Metaphysik', in *Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie* (Quaest. Disp., 51) (Freiburg 1970), 100-117; see also E. Schillebeeckx, 'Het onfeilbare ambt in de kerk', in Conc 9 (1973), n. 3 (86-107; ET 'The problem of the infallibility of the church's office', 77-94), especially 91-98; G. Vass, 'On the historical structure of Christian truth', in *The Heythrop Journal* 9 (1968), 129-142 and 274-289.

[3] See especially Thomas S. Kuhn, *Die Struktur wissenschaftlicher Revolutionen* (Theorie, 2) (Frankfurt 1967) (from the English, 1962).

not separately accessible. They intersect and together form the unified history of human thought. I am not saying that in addition to changing concepts in human thinking there are eternally valid concepts which survive intact every more or less fundamental shift in the experiential or world horizon. What I mean is that the basic structure of human thinking asserts itself in conjuncturally conditioned ideas and the changing hermeneutic and experiential horizon. (Aristotle tried to catalogue, as it were, or identify these 'root ideas' of human thinking. But he failed to distinguish between the structural and conjunctural aspects of our thinking, so his attempt strikes us as obsolete. Still, it was a start.) On this basis it is possible for us (living in a different historical or conjunctural hermeneutic horizon) to understand, for instance, biblical thought, or the hermeneutic horizon in which the Council of Chalcedon formulated its dogmatic definitions. Both structural and (at that time) conjunctural elements of (religious) thinking were operative. Quite apart from the theological import of a dogmatic definition, Chalcedon certainly has something meaningful to say to people living in a different conjunctural horizon, but it may also anger or alienate them. This is caused by the dialectical tension between the conjunctural and structural aspects of thought, a tension that makes each history ambivalent − a constant imperative to interpret, which likewise occurs in the ambiguity of history. History with its ambiguity is transcended, but not annulled, by our time consciousness, which does to some extent transcend 'lived' temporality − not, it is true, as a *conscience survolante* but still as an openness to the Mystery which encompasses all history.[4] [579]

Having located the periodically changing conjunctural (or historical) hermeneutic horizon in the concrete and complex whole of what we call human history (thus to some extent smoothing out the 'epochal cracks' in history or at least reducing them to proper proportions), we can and should recognize the seriousness and profundity of spiritual change in a culture; for the consequences of such a shift in the experiential and hermeneutic horizon for the life of (Christian) faith call for a state of preparedness and for reinterpretation.

More clearly than in earlier times modern people have come to realize not only that they perceive reality through a 'language filter', but that all supposedly direct dealings with the world, with people, with reality, always proceed via conjuncturally conditioned thought and interpretive models. Our thinking is very like the physical sciences − at first sight an odd comparison, for most of us are laymen in that field and do not expect it to offer much existential insight! But what I have in mind is an example familiar to us all: the Copernican revolution. Before Copernicus (or, more precisely, before his

[4] Schillebeeckx, *Geloofsverstaan:interpretatie en kritiek* (Bloemendaal 1972), 37-39 (ET: *The understanding of faith,* Vol. 5 of the present series).

period; for long before him there were doubts) everyone supposed that the universe revolved around the earth; that is, everybody thought spontaneously in terms of the old Ptolemaic interpretive model. They did not even know that it was 'a model', because they actually saw the sun rise and set. For people in antiquity and the Middle Ages it did not seem that they viewed the world through a filter: it was direct, empirical reality. Even after Copernicus we still go on talking like that − and in the area covered by ordinary, day-to-day speech, rightly so. From a different – scientific – angle on the same reality we talk about it just as correctly (but again from a specific perspective, which is neither sacrosanct nor uniquely meaningful) yet quite differently. We put on various spectacles − often without knowing it − when we look at reality. What is more, each cultural period appears to have its own spectacles that a preceding period did not possess; they see things differently from their predecessors. Their 'reading models', filters and viewing models differ. Suppose we spontaneously thought in terms of the Ptolemaic interpretive model. New experiential data will be interpreted according to that model. For a long time the model suffices; even the sciences, operating within that
[580] framework, progress steadily without rift or crisis and accommodate data in the received model. Development is 'homogeneous', as it were. But at a certain moment (and this was observed even before Copernicus) it is established that some empirical data do not fit the model: there are facts it cannot accommodate. When the surplus becomes too big a crisis occurs: the model itself is called into question and science reflects on it until a new interpretive model is found that can explain (at least most of) the surplus. When it was postulated that the earth moves around the sun (and not vice versa) − the Copernican model − a lot of facts inexplicable in the old model suddenly became clear: they found their place. In such a new model science heads once more for a long spell of placid, homogeneous development in which new data are investigated and assigned their place in the model − although in the long term recalcitrant facts are again posited (and noted), till eventually an excessively large tally of unplaceable facts accumulates once more and people are forced to look for a new model.

This applies in different but analogous ways to all areas of human culture, including religious thought, that is, reflection on God's saving activity as experienced by human beings and expressed in religious language. In this expression − which is couched in a given language − our view of man and the world plays an inevitable part. This experiential horizon is socially and historically, that is, conjuncturally conditioned; it shares the historicity of all human life. Following Th. Kuhn (although he was speaking only about 'positive' sciences) we discern two forms of progress in human thinking: (a) a homogeneous, largely continuous development within the same hermeneutic

model, in which new experiences are interpreted and located − 'evolutionary' progress; and (b) progress through fundamental shifts in the (conjunctural) experiential and hermeneutic horizon, which necessitate reinterpretation of all earlier meanings; this entails something of a 'revolution' (albeit in a relative sense, because the 'revolution' is always preceded by a pre-revolutionary phase, in which for some time the model had actually been unsatisfactory. Every radical change in the hermeneutic and experiential horizon has a history of its own!). Along with long periods of peaceful, homogeneous progress, history is marked by occasional radical jolts: a transition from one historical or conjunctural hermeneutic horizon to another. Once a new model has been found, it takes time before it is accepted by everybody as new evidence (note: [581]
because of their specialized nature some models remain in the domain of experts). For a while old and new cultural models will co-exist; the champions of the two models often clash; there may even be polarization: two groups of people, contemporaries, live in mutually alien worlds and cease to understand each other. For the result − especially of radical cultural change (involving models, experience, interpretation and various actions) − cuts deep and reaches wide. As Wittgenstein puts it (albeit in a different context): 'What were ducks before the revolution are rabbits afterwards.' What in the old model of physics was (and still is) a solid easy chair appears in the new atomic model as a kind of empty space with atoms and molecules whirling and dancing inside it. An outsider hearing this for the first time will either shake his head in disbelief or anger at such a new-fangled aberration, since the chair's solidity seems perfectly obvious − or will never sit on a chair with a quiet mind again!

So via a (deliberate) detour we have managed to produce a fairly detailed outline of the religious situation in which we find ourselves as a result of the radical change in experiential and interpretive models representing fresh attempts to render the old beliefs faithfully. Christology and Trinity, redemption, grace and original sin, church and sacraments, prayer and 'the last things' (eschatology): these no longer seem to be what we used to take for granted. Indeed, what were 'ducks', and still are for many of the faithful, others are now calling 'rabbits'; and many feel that they are being led up the garden path.

When our understanding of the world, our models, all our intellectual and spiritual equipment begin to shift and alter, the way we think about our faith will be different too.[5] Naturally mistakes will be made in this process of rethinking the faith − how could it be otherwise? But these are humanly unavoidable by-products of genuine Christian attempts to prevent the faith from

[5] Newly published analyses of the 'epochal intellective horizon': B. Welte, 'Die Krisis der dogmatischen Christusaussagen', in *Die Frage nach Jesu* (ed. A. Paus, Graz-Cologne 1973), 151-180, and N. Lash, *Change in focus* (London 1973).

becoming a historical relic and to make it a living reality in our day and age. That in such periods of drastic change there should be fanatics who view the past simply as a pre-historic epoch and think that we are only now arriving at true, authentic insight − people with a sense of radical liberation and an eye only for the new − is likewise a fairly normal secondary phenomenon in
[582] revolutionary times. We should never judge the revolution as a whole by uncritical elements it contains. If we do, the era begins to look like the coming of the apocalyptic beast when the love of many grows cold: the eve of the eschatological end. This 'model', too, we know from history; and it will keep resurfacing. Those who (for whatever reasons) fail to understand what is really going on will, true to that apocalyptic model, hurl reproaches, for they are convinced that the faith is being eroded − the charitable among them would say unconsciously, others would maintain systematically.

It can't be denied that in limited sectors one can even now still live, act and think quite meaningfully using obsolete models. Maritime navigation, for instance, has always managed to cope effectively using the ancient Ptolemaic model. But air and space travel cannot. The point is that only a new model will advance both science and faith, and open up the future to them. If we had gone on talking about tables or chairs according to the old physical model, moon landings would not have been possible. And yet we continue sitting comfortably on solid chairs. The same applies to Christian faith. I do not begrudge any believer the right to describe and live out his belief in accordance with old experiential, cultural and philosophical models. But this attitude cuts the church off from any future and robs its missionary effort of all power to persuade contemporaries to whom, after all, the gospel is directed today. Obviously the new models will in their turn be replaced by others (just as the Copernican model has already been largely superseded). The question is not whether we know better than the faithful of yore. The question is what, in view of new models of thought and experience, we must do here and now to preserve a living faith which, in our age and because of its truth, has relevance for people, their communities and society. What Christian, for example, still knows what 'the son of man' is − a concept which once shaped the basic outlook of an early Christian generation? Does that make us non-Christian or less Christian? In any event, the problem has now been clearly outlined.

Chapter 2

THE BREAK WITH TRADITION SINCE THE ENLIGHTENMENT

§1 Lessing's view against the background of the Enlightenment[1]

'Accidental, historical truths can never become proofs of necessary truths of reason',[2] there is a yawning gap between the two:[3] thus Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. His postulate has often been interpreted with reference to the philosophy of B. Leibniz and Chr. Wolff, relating it to their distinction between *vérités de fait* and *vérités nécessaires.* In the Enlightenment only the latter − the 'truths of reason' − were important for truly human, emancipated life. For the Enlightenment experience had nothing like the importance assigned to innate truths of reason. Although very much a child of his time, Lessing took a different view of this polarity. For him the antithesis was between 'truths from the past', about which we can be historically informed, and 'lived truths' that we ourselves are experiencing here and now. The point at issue is not the shifting terrain of our experience as opposed to the Enlightened terrain of immutable, rationally evident truths. The contrast lies in the sector of what we call 'factual experience': on the one hand facts handed down from the past, whose historical accuracy we can probe (although the results of this research are somewhat relative and problematic, Lessing takes no exception to that); on the other, personally experienced current events, which are intrinsically [583]

[1] See e.g. K. Aner, *Die Theologie der Lessingzeit* (Hildesheim 1964[2]) (Tübingen 1929); W. Lepenies and H. Nolte, *Kritik der Anthropologie* (Reihe Hanser, 61, Munich 1971); O. Macquard, 'Wie irrational kann Geschichtsphilosophie sein?', in PhJ 79 (1972), 241-253; W. Oelmüller, *Was ist heute Aufklärung?* (Düsseldorf 1972); W. Oelmüller (ed.), *Fortschritt wohin?* (Düsseldorf 1972); M. Riedel, *Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie,* I. *Geschichte, Probleme, Aufgaben* (Freiburg i. Br. 1972); D. Schellong, 'Lessings Frage an die Theologie', in EvTh 30 (1970), 418-432; H. Scholz, 'Zufällige Geschichts- und notwendige Vernunftwahrheiten', in *Harnack-Ehrung. Beiträge zur Kirchen geschichte* (Leipzig 1921), 377-393; R. Schwarz, 'Lessings "Spinozismus"' in ZThK 65 (1968), 271-290; R. Slenczka, *Geschichtlichkeit und Personsein Jesu Christi* (Göttingen 1967).

[2] Zufällige Geschichtswahrheiten können der Beweis von notwendigen Vernunftwahrheiten nie werden' (*Lessings Werke,* ed. J. Pedersen and W. Von Olshausen, Berlin-Leipzig 1924, vol. 23, 47).

[3] Lessing, ibid., vol. 23, 49.

evident. Here Lessing bases himself on the original, that is, anti-traditional Enlightenment. Personal experience has intrinsic evidential value that no 'historical truth' can give me. Jesus may have performed all sorts of miracles – historians can test and confirm it on solid grounds − but what does that mean for me, who no longer experience miracles here and now? The era of the Enlightenment had no experience of miracles. Historically verified miracles of
[584] Jesus did and said nothing to people any more: 'I have not experienced them.' Historical records of past miracles are not actual miracles! For Lessing, therefore, historical criticism of the Bible or hermeneutic reinterpretation was superfluous, of no service to human Reason and irrelevant to contemporary experience. In fact, historically contingent truths are contingent in that all positive religions can serve a rational purpose by 'putting Reason on the right track'. But beyond this auxiliary function historical religions that have been handed down to us have no significance. Thus Lessing stresses rational or immediate experiential evidence. In that sense he reinterprets the Enlightenment's distinction between contingent truths and necessary truths of reason. What according to God's providential, pedagogic design were necessary truths 'in their time' had become contingent for the developed intellect, which apprehended for itself the intrinsic evidence of what religion is. Hence what Jesus had proclaimed and taught in categories suited to his own time served its purpose: it put human Reason on the right track. Everything that human Reason itself had set in motion along this track was the fruit of Jesus' miracles; they were fulfilled prophecies.[4] According to Lessing denial of the present significance of historical truths corresponds to affirmation of historical evolution, for this is seen as a 'revelation', in the sense of God's education of mankind to appreciate rationally fathomed 'intrinsic truth'. In Lessing's view 'positive revelation' is a thrust in one particular direction, an impulse that was necessary in the childhood of the human race and the individual, and which indirectly inculcated knowledge of the evident truths of reason, which men managed to attain for themselves, albeit by many circuitous routes. What divine revelation, understood as a kind of education, offers us in concrete human history is and was built into our very humanity; the divine pedagogy of revelation only gives us quicker and easier access to what we could have found for and by ourselves on the basis of the rationality principle.

What had once been necessary, in view of the state of human reason Enlightened reason now made unnecessary, contingent and finally superfluous. Modern enlightened reason no longer needed either Jesus' miracles or Jesus himself. An updated interpretation of the Bible was therefore declared superfluous, but without prejudice to the historical – hence past −

[4] L.c., 49ff.

relevance of the Bible, in view of the situation of Reason at the time. For [585]
enlightened Reason the Bible was *passé*. Lessing dared not say this as explicitly and openly about the New Testament as he did in respect of the Old Testament; but that was his personal conviction which he expressed in all sorts of devious ways, because he considered his age not yet ready for such radical criticism of the Bible and dogma. For the present, then, we were not yet able to do without Jesus and the New Testament. (Lessing himself could, but his contemporaries – the orthodox or what were known as 'neologists' − not yet; that was why Lessing vacillated in his public statements.) Judging by his letters the born and bred Christian Lessing sometimes worried that he was forcing the pace of God's pedagogy. He was aware of God's long-suffering patience with mankind − God had to travel many side roads with men! He sometimes wondered quite frankly whether he was not forcing God's providential, guiding hand with his premature, enlightened ideas. But to him God was indisputably leading people towards Enlightenment and would make every religion not based on intrinsic, rational and experiential evidence superfluous. Lessing actually wanted a total emancipation of Reason from the biblical Christian tradition. 'Intrinsic experiential evidence', Reason, was the final criterion. Each positively revealed religion should further the emancipated, moral and religious human ideal of 'intrinsic truth' − instead of impeding it; in doing so revealed religion was also historically meaningful. The fundamental thrust of all this was what Immanuel Kant was to formulate as 'religion in the boundaries of pure Reason'.[5] In the process, however, human reason became (if not for Lessing himself, then in the spirit of his times) unhistorical, self-subsistent and isolated from its historical empirical tradition. This a-temporality of Reason was to coincide, moreover, with Hegel's contemporaneous moment of a particular phase of culture: the present becomes as it were an *eschaton,* the age of truth.

§2 Contemporary 'christological' tendencies in the wake of the Enlightenment

I do not propose analysing the positive and laudable critical impulse which the Enlightenment brought to Western thinking. What concerns me is how the historically conditioned one-sided effect of this critical impulse has influenced certain sectors of present-day christological thinking, sometimes unconsciously, often also consciously concurring with this critical phase of [586]
human thought. In doing so I articulate a trend which I have never found spelled out in the literature but one which became clear to me, especially in

[5] *Kants Werke* (ed. W. Weischedel) (Darmstadt 1956-1964), vol. 7 (title).

North America, in the course of many conversations with theologians of diverse denominations. I also discern traces of it on our continent (least of all, however, among Dutch theologians).

According to this approach Jesus inspired, served as a catalyst for and animated religious values; at the same time he epitomized religious experience. Jesus indeed mediated new religious values and even a religiously original experience. But, the argument runs, this historical mediation must not itself be universalized. The values he inspired did bear fruit in subsequent history, so we can assign him universal, even definitive, importance. Because the religious values he triggered carried on in history, believers inspired by him constantly created new images of Jesus out of earlier material. That has always been the way of history. After all (this is my reconstruction of the argument), how many images of Moses and David do we not find in the various strata of the Old Testament? The story, the religious story of mankind goes on. Hence it is fitting to remember the religious giants who went before us, especially the great inspirer of religious traditions associated with the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

On this view these new images of Jesus (apart from our human need for them) are actually unimportant, if not superfluous. They are really expressions of completely new religious experiences. But because Jesus was the great promoter of religious experience, believers continue to remember him with gratitude as their precursor in their own new experiences. That is why we retroject our new experiences of God on to Jesus. In that way new Jesus images emerge, yet these tell us nothing about Jesus of Nazareth, only something about our own new experiences − just as the good things that emerged in Israel were later projected onto Moses as the prototype, the ancient leader and founder of the Jewish people. One can indeed discern an anthropological model in this retrojection of, new experiences, based on earlier historical material, onto the initiator of the movement or of a particular tradition complex. The literature is full of such 'updatings' (or 'epic concentrations'),
[587] which turn out to be no such thing (according to this view) but completely new material, albeit part of a history in which religiosity is nothing new: the religious story had begun long before.

Especially in a history still marked by 'narrative innocence' the reintroduction of ancient stories (actually verbal expressions of completely new experience) is standard practice. It is a matter of composing a completely new story based on new experience, although the composition draws on older material expressing analogous experiences

In this view the new Jesus images are purely mythical conceptions, their real, non-mythical content being simply our own historically new religious experience (although Jesus is seen as the original exemplar and animator at the

time). Up to a point this conception preserves the confession that Jesus proclaimed a uniquely original relation to God and to fellow men, but – it is said − the actual person is not absolute; in other words, Jesus is the historical medium of a unique religious experience, but it cannot be universalized. Hence in this view the substance of the transmitted experience is not irreducibly bound up with the person of Jesus as a transmitter of religious values and experiences.

What it boils down to is that one task of theology must be to examine the relationship between the various forms of religious expression (in non-Western and Western religions) and the core of religious experience. *Christian* theology would be the study of the Christian message as one expression of human religious experience. This is fundamentally Enlightenment, *Aufklärung* thought, which assimilated certain tacit assumptions along with the critical impulses of the spirit of those times.

§3 Acknowledged and tacit assumptions

The foregoing analysis is based on all kinds of assumptions, both acknowledged and tacit. Thus it acknowledges the premise that historical statements are always open and reversible, and therefore do not offer a firm foothold. The implication is obvious: ascribing universal significance to Jesus of Nazareth per se is pre-critical; it is by definition super-cultural – which conflicts with the fundamental pluralism of human culture. In other words, it [588] answers the question regarding the unique universality of Jesus of Nazareth (negatively) even before an inquiry has begun. The question is dismissed as a pseudo-problem. But because one operates in a specific (Christian) tradition, once one accepts this a priori negative solution, the next step is to find a meaningful explanation of what the Christian claim to universality could have meant in a pre-critical age. The negative response boils down to this: because all of us − including Jesus − are historical beings, nobody can be assigned absolute status. Although a historical person may reveal absolute value, that value cannot be extended to the historical intermediary; that is the presupposition of the historical Enlightenment. It follows that there is no essential link between Jesus' person and the religious message of absolute values which he conveyed. That denies the very crux of the Christian kerygma: the intrinsic connection between Jesus' person and his message of God's approaching reign.

Considering the many parallel 'eponymous' tendencies (or 'epic concentrations') in world literature, in which the experiences of historical individuals or groups are 'prototypically' projected onto key figures from the past (e.g. tribal ancestors: Jacob, Abraham, Cain, Adam), we must accept that

they are anthropologically structured; but recognizing such a structure in itself does not answer the question concerning the reality of the actual person. The anthropological structure merely points to structures of human consciousness, which do not affirm or deny the truth and reality. At the same time it indicates that if Jesus in fact embodied transcendent reality, it was not a hocus-pocus transcendence but one that would manifest itself via the normal structures of the human mind. At all events, whether Jesus represented a transcendent universality must be confirmed or denied on *other* grounds. The aforementioned 'christological' tendency is therefore located in a hermeneutic horizon in which, according to the Enlightenment, human reason can posit a priori limits to meaningful possibilities. Certainly 20th century people can no longer work with a pre-critical Christology. But does this narrow rationality principle of the Enlightenment itself not call for criticism?

[589] Besides, this type of 'new Christology' entails a second form of rationalism and a-priorism: the claim that all historical knowledge can be turned round. No historian would deny that the findings of historical inquiry are always open to revision, refinement and correction. But it strikes me as flagrantly false to say that because of this no historical judgment can ever be called founded, that it is simply and purely a 'probable hypothesis'. Yet (according to its proponents) the whole of the aforementioned 'christological' movement is built on the correctness of this presupposition. What is unscientific about this premise is its facile identification of 'objectivity' with a kind of 'omniscience'; and since that is in no way given, every form of historical objectivity is denied.[6] It disregards the fact that it is enough if a historian advances adequate grounds for what he presents as a historical conclusion. Of course diverse, complementary views of the past are possible; but they are not necessarily or for that reason self-contradictory. The fact that the 19th century biographical 'lives of Jesus of Nazareth' not only differ but actually contradict each other in no way implies that all historical knowledge about Jesus is basically uncertain.

The underlying presupposition is correct (though false conclusions have been drawn from it): there is always a theoretical possibility that our historical statements could be mistaken. That is fair enough, provided we make a distinction: (a) having *adequate guarantees* to posit a historical conclusion, that is, reasonably discounting the 'theoretical possibility' that one may be mistaken; (b) *knowing* what happened in history.[7] While the latter is falsifiable, a present-day historian can nevertheless have sufficient, rationally substantiated guarantees to make a historical judgment. To contend that because of the perennial 'theoretical possibility' of future correction (e.g. as a result of the discovery of new sources or documents) our current historical

[6] See P. Carnley, 'The poverty of historical scepticism', in *Christ, faith, history,* 165-190.
[7] Thus, rightly, P. Carnley, l.c., 171ff.

judgments are false, or cannot claim historical certainty, betrays unwarranted rationalism in the field of history. The arguments adduced merely indicate that our historical knowledge is never a-historical or super-historical and itself forms part of the historical quest for truth. Affirming or denying a past event is never based on 'evidence' but on specific arguments, which permit the affirmation or negation. Hence if somebody adduces grounds for denying X, that does not mean that X never happened, only that we have no grounds to corroborate it. (That is why the search for a 'storm-free zone' for faith – i.e. [590] irrespective of the built-in uncertainty of historical findings − is equally unjustified.)

The logical and theoretical possibility of error implicit in every historical judgment does not have to result in actual error. In the context of a non-rationalistic understanding of human life the historian can have adequate grounds for disregarding this abstract, theoretical possibility. There are innumerable instances in which we both could and should ignore the theoretical possibility if human life is to remain viable. The conclusion thus seems justified: it is wrong to maintain that the Christian faith has no historical grounds merely because judgments about past events are themselves historical. By the same token it is wrong to contend that *religious* judgments must be completely independent of historical judgments (as many kerygma theologians since Bultmann – including P. Tillich − have argued).

The same christological movement entails a third rationalistic a priori. Scholars refer to the *core* of religious experience, which the theologian is supposed to compare with the various forms of religious expression in Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and so on. But who decides what 'the core' of religious experience is? What is the criterion − one's own religion?

'Religious experience' as such strikes me as a pure abstraction, first extrapolated in the Enlightenment from various religions that became empirically accessible at the time. In making this abstraction these scholars of religion themselves became 'founders', as it were, of a new religion, more specifically a 'generalized religiosity' that emerged as a kind of chemical precipitate from abstract deism. It is a product of unhistorical thinking; the historical and cultural context of a religion is concealed behind a purely abstract, theoretical universality without flesh and blood and, as history attests, without any attraction: the deistic 'abstraction' proved to be short-lived.

This in no way denies that one can meaningfully try to define religion, on the basis of the configuration of personal existence, 'as a system of symbols which functions by bringing about potent, insistent and enduring states of mind and motivations in people, by putting into words a design for a universal order of existence and surrounding this design or project with such an aura of

[591] factuality that those states of mind and motivations seem to be real in a unique way'.[8] Such a definition of religion is very different from isolating a *core* in the religious experiences of all religions in such a way that the core becomes absolute and the historical character of the religions is reduced to interchangeable phraseology.

§4 Universality via historically particular mediation

Although the Enlightenment's critical approach to the traditions handed down to us must be acknowledged as a permanent gain that cannot be sacrificed with impunity, we have to recognize the poverty of rationalistic criticism. The anti-historical approach of enlightened and enlightening Reason is increasingly coming under fire.[9] It was the Enlightenment's own narrow principle of rationality that was uncritical. On that basis it propounded an ideal, universal humanity, the *humanum*, without any historical, particular, real embodiment. Its 'sound Reason' was an a-historical or super-historical abstraction. Such an ideal mankind does nothing to further humanity. Since the Enlightenment many unprofitable experiences have led our age to realize that mankind does not dispose of the *humanum*; true humanity is not something we have mastered and have in our power. It is still 'outstanding', still to be found. We have rightly come to speak of *homo absconditus* (E. Bloch). A universal concept of humanity is in itself ambiguous; it needs a critical point of reference, a criterion; and that is given in the history of human suffering, which has been only slightly allayed since the Enlightenment − unless we equate humanity with the affluence of a consumer society based on science and technology.

The Enlightenment saw every distinction between human beings as arising simply and solely from particular institutions of a historically random character. In the name of a natural, as it were pre-cultural brotherhood it demanded the abolition of all divisions and the integration of ethics that must apply identically to all human beings. There is something splendid about this vision, but it comes at a price: such all-inclusive brotherhood becomes unreal and meaningless. Romanticism expressed it as *'Seid umschlungen, Millionen'*
[592] (Schiller) and Beethoven's Ninth put it to music: '*Alle Menschen werden Brüder*'. But a universal brotherhood aimed unrealistically at all alike and insisting on 'impartial' love for all men in fact reaches nobody − certainly not the outcasts! Nowadays sociologists are asking whether what is needed is not small groups,

[8] C. Geertz, 'Religion as a cultural system', in W.A. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt (eds.), *Reader in Comparative Religion* (New York 1965), 206.

[9] See literature under footnote 1, especially W. Oelmüller; in addition: N. Luhmann, *Soziologische Aufklärung* (Cologne-Opladen 1970), 85; see also J. Habermas, *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Frankfurt 1968), 344.

cells, grassroots communities as the only means of effectively influencing the whole for the good of *all*.

Marxism, another product of the Enlightenment, also considered distinctions between people a historical phenomenon: history was untrue to nature, resulting in human self-alienation. But Marxism believes we can overcome this historical alienation by a conscious struggle to return to 'pure nature': via the restricted brotherhood of the socialist party to universal brotherhood.[10] In contrast to the Enlightenment, this displays a sound principle: universality via historically particular intermediaries.

For its part, the Christology of the 'death of God' theologians sees the rejection or disregard of 'divine transcendence' as a necessary condition for establishing universal brotherhood. Jesus the Christ will in fact, they stated, deliver us from God's man-alienating transcendence. Instead of attacking these theologians for eroding the Christian faith, we should rather determine what elements of existing theological theories of salvation have had such a man-alienating effect as to make many people experience the denial of divine transcendence as true liberation! According to post-medieval theory of Christian salvation as 'penal substitution' (a fundamentally false interpretation of Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction) man really was condemned by God's 'transcendent righteousness' to blind obedience and fruitless culpability: God demanded the sacrifice of an innocent Jesus to absolve mankind from its debt to him. That is what present-day plane hijackers do with their innocent hostages in order to expose the guilt of society as a whole to world opinion.

Here again ideology critique is called for on the basis of the breakdown of our relationship with the Enlightenment. It broke down primarily because we came to realize the critical importance of traditions and institutions from the past, as opposed to the Enlightenment's attitude towards them. Critical recollection of the past has a humanizing effect which the Enlightenment failed to perceive.

We also have to consider that the Christian affirmation − that the 'God of Jesus' is the God of all men and that this was evident in the person, message and conduct of Jesus − was manifested in a member of one of the peoples in [593] the world which had to suffer most from discrimination: a Jew, Jesus of Nazareth. By experiencing the deepest inspiration of prophetic Yahwism in such a radical way Jesus was able to explode the Judaic system, identifying himself with the outcast, the poor, the deprived, sinners: with every person in need. Such identification in pursuit of true universality suggests an unmistakable partiality in Jesus' love, directed to God's universal reign. Discriminating, even biased particularity can reveal universal value and reality

[10] K. Löwith, *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschichte* (Stuttgart 1953[3]), 38-54.

that unites all human beings − though for an all too human, 'possessive' outlook this may well be scandalous. Jesus' deliberate association with sinners and other social outcasts, thus extending to them too the offer of salvation, was offensive to the official representatives of the nation − it was an explosive praxis.

The New Testament understands this very well; one can still sense in it the tension inherent in universality-via-particularization. On the one hand to Jesus a brother is simply one's neighbour, the person in distress that one actually encounters: the humble or the least.[11] Transcending all distinctions, Jesus's brothers are people in distress *by virtue of* their need. Thus brotherhood is rooted in the long history of human suffering, which has to be surmounted and which summons us to universal solidarity. A neighbour is someone who is concerned about the plight of any person in distress that he comes across, for that person is Jesus' brother. This gives truly universal brotherhood a historically particular reference: Jesus of Nazareth − without forfeiting its own concrete, historical reference to the particular person in distress. On the other hand, the same New Testament (even in the synoptics, but especially Paul and the Johannine gospel) calls members of the small, specifically Christian community in a special sense, as distinct from non-Christians, brothers (fellow Christians). That is to say: the restricted, circumscribed brotherhood of the Christian community i**s** directed to universal brotherhood. Thus universal brotherhood is effectively embodied in a historically particular, limited brotherhood. That is the profound importance of the performative statement of the Second Vatican Council, when it declared that 'the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of mankind'.[12]

[594] Both theologically and sociologically this seems to be a responsible statement, which simultaneously calls on Christians to live out their Christian brotherhood in order to promote the project of universal brotherhood among all people as a microcosmic model of what should be the object of all human endeavour on a larger scale. It shows that Jesus' identity is located in his identification with all men, based on his identification with the cause of God: God's reign as salvation for mankind, the universal shalom or kingdom of God. For that reason the rationalistic, a priori assumption that universal salvation via a historically particular mediator (concretely, moreover, an object of discrimination by others, namely the Jew Jesus) is an offence to human dignity, impossible and pre-critical, is an untenable critical postulate; it is unhistorical and uncritical. After all, the historical particularity and even

[11] Mt. 10:42; 11:11; 18:6-10. See ThWNT IV, 650-661. In the gospels the smallest and least significant are themselves already identified with the Christians. See e.g. Berger, *Amen-Worte,* 41, p. 38, and 41-46.

[12] *Lumen Gentium,* n. 1.

partiality professed in the Christian creed are prompted not by self-interest but by the interests of others. We must not drop below the level of the Enlightenment; but neither must we blithely embrace its limitations and unfounded, rationalistic presuppositions: our age's relationship with the Enlightenment has been broken. We cannot 'update' and readopt the entire Enlightenment (or the past as a whole). Besides perpetuating an updated version of its critical impulse, we must veto (i.e. not implement) its uncritical presuppositions.

Section Two

A 'UNIVERSAL HERMENEUTIC HORIZON' NOT AMENABLE TO THEORIZING

Chapter 1

UNIQUE UNIVERSALITY OF A HISTORICALLY PARTICULAR HUMAN BEING

§1 The concept of human transcendence

Literature. In regard to a Christology 'from below', only a selection from the prolific literature is possible; here we cite mainly works which look for Jesus' transcendence in his humanity, whether in a christological or a reductive sense (H. Braun; P. van Buren), as well as some reactions against it. T. van Bavel, 'God absorbeert niet: de christologie van Schoonenberg', TvT 11 (1971), 383-411, and 'Verrijzenis: grondslag of object van het geloof in Christus', TvT 13 (1973), 133-144; H. Berkhof, 'Schoonenberg en Pannenberg: de tweesprong van de huidige christologie', TvT 11 (1971), 413-422; H. Braun, *Jesus* (Berlin 1969[2]), chs 12 and 13; P van Buren, *The secular meaning of the gospel* (New York 1963) and *Theological explorations* (New York 1963); P. Colin, 'Le caractère sacré de la personne de Jésus-Christ. Approche philosophique', RSR 57 (1969), 519-542; Chr. Duquoc, *Christologie, II. Le Messie* (Paris 1972); G. Ebeling, *Wort und Glaube* (Tübingen 1967[3]), 205-254; G. Galot, *Vers me nouvelle théologie* (Paris 1971) (this book is based on a total misinterpretation of the authors in question, hence is theologically substandard); N. Greinacher, K. Lang and P. Scheuermann (eds), *In Sachen Synode* (Düsseldorf 1970), 150-169; A. Hulsbosch, 'Jezus Christus, gekend als mens, beleden als Zoon Gods', TvT 6 (1966), 250-272, and 'Christus, de scheppende wijsheid van God', TvT 11 (1971), 66-76; H. I. Iwand, *Die Gegenwart des Kommenden,* (Göttingen 1955); E. Jüngel, *Unterwegs zur Sache* [596]
(Munich 1972); Ph. Kaiser, *Die Gottmenschliche Einigung in Christus als Problem der spekulativen Theologie seit der Scholastik* (Munich 1968); W. Kasper, *Einführung in den Glauben* (Mainz 1972), 43-56, and 'Die Sache Jesu: Recht und Grenzen eines Interpretationsversuchs', *Herderkorrespondenz* 26 (1972), 185-189; L. E. Keck, *A future for the historical Jesus* (Nashville-New York 1971); A. Kolb, *Menschwerdung und Evolution* (Grasz 1970); H. Küng, *Menschwerdung Gottes*

(Freiburg i.-Br. 1970); H. M. Kuitert, *Om en om. Een bundel theologie en geloofsbezinning* (Kampen 1972); R. Michiels, *Een mens om nooit te vergeten* (Antwerp-Utrecht 1972); J. Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung* (Munich 1968), and *Der gekreuzigte Gott* (Munich 1972); G. Muschalek, 'Gott in Jesus. Dogmatische Ueberlegungen zur heutigen Fremdheit des menschgewordenen Sohn Gottes', ZKTh 94 (1972), 145-157; W. Pannenberg, especially *Grundzüge der Christologie,* (Gütersloh 1969[3], 1964), and *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie* (Göttingen 1967); K. Rahner, 'Die zwei Grundtypen der Christologie', *Schriften zur Theologie,* vol. 10 (Einsiedeln 1972), 227-238 (and passim in *Schriften zur Theologie);* K. Rahner and W. Thüsing, *Christologie − systematisch und exegetisch* (Quaestiones Disputatae, 55) (Freiburg i.-Br. 1972); J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum* (Munich 1968), 168-221; Kl. Reinhardt, 'Die Einzigartigkeit der Person Jesu Christi', IKZ (1973), 206-224, and 'Die menschliche Transzendenz', *Freib. Theol. Zeitschrift* 80 (1971), 273-289; J.A.T. Robinson, 'Need Jesus have been perfect?' *Christ, faith, history,* 39-52, and 'A reply to Mr Sykes', ibid., 73-75; E. Schillebeeckx, 'Persoonlijke openbaringsgestalte van de Vader', TvT 6 (1966), 274-288, and 'The crisis in the language of faith as a hermeneutical problem', Conc 9 (1973, n. 5), 31-45; 'Ons heil: Jezus' leven of Christus de verrezene?', TvT 13 (1973), 145-166; M. Schoof, *Break-through: beginnings of the new Catholic theology (*Dublin 1970) = *A survey of Catholic theology 1800-1970* (Paramus N.J. 1970); P. Schoonenberg, 'Christus zonder tweeheid', TvT 6 (1966), 289-306; 'Jezus Christus vandaag dezelfde', *Geloof bij kenterend getij* (Roermond-Maaseik, undated), 163-184; 'Het avontuur der christologie', TvT 12 (1972), 307-322; 'De zoekende christologie van A. Hulsbosch', TvT 13 (1973), 261-287; *Hij is een God van mensen* (Den Bosch 1969) (ET *The Christ. A study of the God-man relationship* (New York, London and Sydney 1971/71); H. Schürmann, 'Der proexistente Christus − die Mitte des Glaubens von morgen?', *Diakonia* 3 (1972), 147-160; S. W. Sykes, 'The theology of the humanity of Christ?', *Christ, faith, history,* 53-72; D. Sölle, *Stellvertretung* (Stuttgart 1965); D. Wiederkehr, 'Entwurf einer systematischen Christologie', *Mysterium Salutis,* III-1 (Einsiedeln, 1970, 478-645.).

[597] In their search for the locus of Jesus Christ's unique universality many recent theologians have located his transcendence in his human dimension. Jesus is seen either as the acme of the general relationship between creature and creator, or as the 'eschatological man', last Adam or 'new man', the presence of the one to come, et cetera. A. Hulsbosch formulated the principle particularly aptly and logically: 'Jesus' divine nature is significant in the mystery of salvation only insofar as it transforms and elevates human nature. Insofar as it does this we have a new mode of humanness ... The divine nature is irrelevant except insofar as it elevates human nature; insofar as it does not do this, it has

no significance for us; but insofar as it *does,* we are dealing with a human reality. If we say: besides being man Jesus is also God, then the "also God" is not our business, because it is not translated into the human reality of salvation.'[1] This is an apt example of an attempt to locate Jesus' salvific reality in his human aspect; in other words, if Jesus has unique universality, then it must reside in his actual humanity, not beyond or above it. The form of God's revelation is the man Jesus. Thus God's divinity will be disclosed in Jesus' humanity. The mystery of Jesus, which faith professes about him, must therefore lie *in* the man himself. The human is indeed the measure (note: not the norm and criterion) in which the divine appears – after all, God is accessible only in creaturely manifestations. If Jesus Christ is God the Son, then we know it only from the manner in which he was human; it must be clear from his human life; he must be human in a completely unique way.[2] If not, he would offer no access to the Father. Schoonenberg puts it succinctly: 'That human transcendence can never be fully objectivized . . . In Christ God realizes precisely what it means to be human, hence it is impossible to pinpoint what is real in him and not in other persons… We cannot identify any divinity in Jesus that is not realized in and through his humanity.'[3]

That raises the problem of what is meant by 'human transcendence', for humanity implies constant self-transcendence. In terms of Sartre's philosophy the answer would be that such anthropological self-transcendence is not expressive of a surplus but of a fundamental deficiency, a hole in our existence that can never be filled. In itself that tells us nothing about the possible meaning of human life. At all events, human transcendence in Jesus must [598] signify that something in his life shows that he found an unconditional ground in God, which makes his human life comprehensible. The question is, where does this transcendent ground of his human life manifest itself in the man Jesus?

Speaking about Jesus' 'transcending humanity' as opposed to that of other human beings raises the question whether the transcendence is relative or absolute, qualitative and gradual or quintessential. Hulsbosch initially spoke of a difference of degree, not of kind,[4] but added that in Jesus' human mind his experience of God differed essentially from that of other human beings, which would imply that he differed from other people in his very essence.[5] This reveals a struggle to find proper terminology, in which regard Schoonenberg comments: 'The terms "relative" and "qualitative" aptly express that the

[1] See TvT 6 (1966), 255-256.
[2] Schoonenberg speaks of 'human transcendence' and of 'transcendent humanity', in *Geloof bij kenterend getij,* 180-181 and 177-178; cf. Schillebeeckx, in TvT 6 (1966), 276-277.
[3] L.c., 188-198.
[4] TvT 6 (1966), 255.
[5] L.c., 270.

transcendence of Jesus Christ falls *within* our humanity, but they threaten to turn him into a coincidental highlight instead of God's ultimate revelation. The latter is evident when we speak of an "absolute" and "essential" difference between Christ and ourselves, but it threatens to place him outside our humanity.'[6] Schoonenberg then formulates his own view: 'One could say that the Christ is an acme of sanctification, not of humanity; but his sanctification is human in every dimension. It may be better not to use the foregoing antitheses but to look for a different term such as "eschatological", "definitive", "ultimate". That would locate Christ in our history and tell us something about the substance of his human transcendence. We can say that in him the fullness of humanity is realized, *because* the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him.'[7] Fullness of humanity is not understood in a mythical or Greco-patristic sense, nor as a negation of Jesus' personal individuality; but 'in his involvement with us lies the transcendent fullness of his humanity' as a 'man for others'. Later this is corrected: the expression 'Jesus is a man for others' is one-sided.[8]

In all this one observes clear trends to look for a connection with the profession of Jesus' universality in his manner of being human, even if his human transcendence can only be apprehended in faith. This is not a contradiction. Human life would not be feasible without *faith* in one another; something can be authentically human and yet accessible only to faith and trust.

[599] Still, the idea of 'human transcendence' is not as straightforward as it might appear. It presupposes that we know precisely what it means to be human and on that basis can fathom what transcendent humanity is. However, from the Anglo-Saxon controversy between S. Sykes and J. Robinson it seems that this entails many unknown elements. There is a trend to expound the Chalcedonian definition as follows: 'Jesus is truly God' − that is a declaration of faith; 'he is truly man', it is then alleged, is not a declaration of faith but an ordinary human statement. The same kind of word play is also found in the creed. For instance, 'he suffered, died, was buried and is risen': suffering, death and burial are historically verifiable events, on a different plane from resurrection. True enough, but note the context: that Jesus died is a historically accessible truth and as such not a direct object of faith; but 'died for our sins' is an object of faith. Faith also concerns the *meaning* of a historical fact. Something similar applies to the affirmation 'Jesus is truly man'. (a) Is this a purely historical statement? (b) Is it not also, albeit from a different perspective, an affirmation of faith? (c) Is it an a priori presupposition of every human history, unless the contrary is demonstrated? In short, is it correct to say we *know* that

[6] *Geloof bij kenterend getij,* 179-180.
[7] L.c., 180. The same in TvT 12 (1972), 313-314.
[8] TvT 12 (1972), 318.

Jesus is truly man, but *believe* that (in some other, to be carefully specified way) he is truly God?[9]

It is assumed that all historiography has to do with human beings and human behaviour; if in the course of his account the historian comes across ghosts, spirits, superhuman beings or whatever, their existence will have to be proven; normally he proceeds on the assumption that it is human behaviour even if the characters *speak* about ghosts and spirits, or about God, angels and demons. This implies a preconception of what man's mode of being is and what is humanly possible. But it is becoming increasingly clear that concepts like humanity, freedom, justice and the like are empty formulae used to justify all manner of contradictory ideological and ideo-political notions. We must either do without these concepts (which seems impossible) or constantly justify and explain their use.

Yet there are limits. Can the historian exclude a priori the reports of people who claimed that their master, Jesus Christ, had risen again from his notion of what is 'humanly possible'? What is humanly possible? Here S. Sykes makes a relevant distinction between 'aspective humanity' and 'empirical humanity'.[10] What, after all, is the basis of our confidence that we are dealing with a real human being? Some aspects are obvious: that he was born of two parents [600] belonging to the human race (disregarding possible cases of parthenogenesis − in which case the baby would be a girl, according to present genetic knowledge), and that he looks like a human being. We know from history that Jesus looked and behaved like a human being. That is 'aspective humanity'.

But our notion of humanity is also the product of a whole series of generalizations of 'normality'; the aggregate of these is 'empirical humanity': an image of humanity based on innumerable examples of people we have known in various phases of their lives.

There can be no doubt about Jesus' aspective humanity. But what about his empirical humanity? The church fathers provide a fine example of Christian ambivalence on that score. It was difficult for them to admit that Jesus could have felt real hunger and thirst, was ignorant, made mistakes and so forth. The possibility that Jesus might have shared certain misconceptions of his age was a bone of contention among Christians for centuries. Jesus' sinlessness in particular posed a problem:[11] was he by definition incapable of sin because he was the Son of God, or was he capable of sinning but (when it came to the

[9] Thus the problem as sharply stated by S.W. Sykes, "Theology of the humanity of Christ', in *Christ, faith, history,* 53-72.
[10] L.c., 54-5.
[11] See J.A.T. Robinson, in *Christ, faith history,* 39-52; and then Th. Lorenzmeier, 'Wider das Dogma von der Sündlosigkeit Jesu', in EvTh 31 (1971), 452-471; H. Gollwitzer, 'Zur Frage der Sündlosigkeit Jesu', in EvTh 31 (1971), 496-506; Pannenberg, *Grundzüge,* 368-378; A. Durand, 'La liberté du Christ dans son rapport à l'impeccabilité', in NRTh (1948), 811-822.

crunch) hardly ever did?[12] All this points to diverse views of Jesus' humanity. These are theological statements. In addition pre-Nicene theology wrestled with the question whether Jesus assumed man's 'fallen nature' or the 'unspoilt nature' which (it is said) existed before the fall. Although pope Leo I in his celebrated *Tomus ad Flavium* wrote that Jesus Christ is *totus in suis, totus in nostris* (completely 'at home' with God and completely 'at home' with men), he was nonetheless thinking in terms of an unspoilt nature. From the standpoint of incarnation theology S. Sykes's question is pertinent: in this situation, can we define a priori the nature of Jesus' humanity? Is God's saving activity observable in historical phenomena? And if God acted in a special way in Jesus for the salvation of men, a manner not observable elsewhere, what does it entail for Jesus' mode of being human?

The problem of determining the locus in which God's special saving activity in Jesus is manifest to the eye of the believer is inescapable; consequently consideration of Jesus' humanity entails more than purely historical questions. There is always a tendency in both orthodox and so-called heterodox circles to
[601] dictate to God how we would like to see salvation in Jesus incarnated. It is striking that the more theology insists on Jesus' humanity, the more it needs to qualify that humanity in some special way: full humanity, the new man, the definitive and eschatological man, prototype of humanity, and so on. It is difficult to show how Jesus' humanity – he was a human being like us in all things except sin − differs from our own. What is clear is that our idea of 'being human' cannot be a norm and criterion for our appraisal of Jesus. His concrete humanity is more likely the norm and criterion of our conception of it; and it is those elements of the man Jesus that prompt our christological preoccupation with him. Hence we cannot categorically say that he was a *human person.* To be sure, I assume a priori that the man Jesus, who appeared in our history, was a human person − what else would he be? But *what* the designation 'human person' ultimately signifies in Jesus' case I have to leave open in the course of my inquiry. His concrete, human/personal mode of being will have to be filled out on the basis of his life, death and resurrection, and that process might well correct my a priori conception of a human person. Jesus might well teach us what it really means to be human, in other words, that the measure for assessing Jesus is not our idea of humanity but that *his* humanity is the measure by which we ought to judge ourselves. Perhaps he is the God-given revelation of what it means to be truly human and, via that, what it means to be God. In the history of human suffering, desperately fumbling for meaning, salvation, truly liberated and free humanity, and confronted with the message of the religions – more especially Jesus' message of the kingdom of a humanly

[12] Thus J.A.T. Robinson: 'He was fallible, but when the sticking point came *he did not fail' (Christ, faith, history,* 75).

oriented God − we must at least be open to this message: does it provide a satisfying prospect which is not provided anywhere else? Can *our* idea of 'normal humanity' still function as a criterion? But if Jesus is truly man, while the Christian faith asserts that he personifies the revelation of the Father − the living God − then we have to acknowledge the consequences of God's saving presence in the measure and finite compass of Jesus' humanity. In Jesus we see what man is capable of when he is wholly 'of God' and wholly 'of men' − when he experiences the cause of humanity as above all God's cause. And then we find that human perfection is attained only in the risk inherent in all historically particularity, limitation and contingency. Chr. Duquoc seems to have arrived at the same conclusion on the basis of different data:[13] an 'absolute ideal', with no regard to its concrete historical contingency and [602] limitation, cannot provide a foundation for Christology. So we need not compare Jesus of Nazareth with our idea of 'humanity', but should simply try, through the New Testament, to discover how Jesus concretely lived his human life and how those who believed in him came to experience him as the saviour of all men.

However ambivalent and contingent Jesus' humanity may have been, there must have been grounds in his historical person (where else?) for interpreting him − at any rate after his death, the completion of his life – the way he is interpreted in the New Testament. Without this historical foundation such an interpretation by his confidantes after his death would be mere ideology and mystification. Looking for these historical grounds requires openness both to the real ambivalence of what was manifested in Jesus and to the possibility that historical study of this Jew, the man Jesus of Nazareth, will show him to be a complex, problematic figure − in such a way that the Christian interpretation (besides other possible interpretations) will emerge as a rationally meaningful possibility, firmly grounded in Jesus' history, albeit historically not the sole or cogently unambiguous one. For a humane, reasonable and ethical existential option this is more than adequate − no other movement or worldview can advance better assurances of substantiated, real future possibilities. That being the case, the Christian interpretation of history and the concomitant praxis are neither ideological nor mystifying.

§2 Unique universality: universal appeal of 'what is worthy of man'

A. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

For a reality to have universal significance means that it affects every person's definition of the ultimate purpose of his life, in other words that his destiny is

[13] Chr. Duquoc, *Christologie,* II. *Le Messie,* 350-351.

determined by a real and – given our freedom − freely accepted reference to this universal value. It is a reality that imparts universal meaning, but one has
[603] to experience it as meaningful if it is to have that effect. In other words, the universal meaning which may emerge in a real-life situation has no concrete substance if we fail to recognize it personally as an appeal directed to our inquiring minds. Through personal motivation that universal value can become fascinating in its own right. Thus we ourselves decide the meaning and purpose of our lives on the basis of universal values manifested in real life.

The problem confronting us is this. Can such unique universality be found and identified in one historical person, Jesus of Nazareth? Put differently, does this man, Jesus of Nazareth, confessed by his disciples in his lifetime as the Christ, Son of God and Lord, still have meaning for us today in the sense that we, too, can find definitive, ultimate wellbeing and salvation in him? The underlying problem is bound up with the question of how a particular historical event can have universal significance for all human beings, hence also for us today. If this is at all possible, it seems to require a historical intermediary.

Finding the meaning of one's life in constitutive reference to Jesus of Nazareth is manifestly a religious quest, that is, a way of determining the overall meaning of life. 'Religious' refers to man's relation to the whole and, ultimately, to the living God; it also refers to God in his relation to man. A religious statement, then, always entails both anthropological and theological discourse: it is a way of speaking about man and God, all in one. This intrinsically implies that a religious statement can only have universal significance for everyone if it can be verified at least to some extent, that is, if it can be showed that the believer's affirmation of God's universal love for men − a direct**ly** non-empirical reality – also discloses man's true humanity – an empirical, demonstrable fact.

Thus the question of Jesus' unique universality encompasses two interrelated poles: on the one hand, unveiling the true face of God, on the other disclosing the true nature of man, in such a way that the former is achieved via the latter. The one true, living God becomes a shadowy abstraction, universally unattainable, unless at the same time the true face of humanity emerges in the religious reality and the discourse about it. Only by respecting this fundamental structure of religious discourse can a claim to universality have
[604] intrinsic evidential value which distinguishes it from ideological pretension. In that case the best approach to the distinctive nature of Jesus of Nazareth and his universal significance seems to be not to approach him either from a preconceived notion of what it means to be God or of what it means to be man, hence a human person. It is not a matter of fitting together two models or concepts – 'human being' and 'divine being' − so as to arrive at a conceivable

(or inconceivable) 'amalgam' of a God-man, at the perhaps abstractly conceivable model of 'God made man', for which Jesus of Nazareth might have been a historical occasion. Turning to Jesus to find salvation in him means approaching him in a state of not knowing, or rather of 'open knowledge' of the true meaning of humanity and divinity alike, maybe to learn from him the true nature *via* their interrelationship as manifested in Jesus. Naturally we have certain conceptions of both man and God, as the Jews had when they encountered Jesus. Jesus himself belonged to the tradition of the Yahwistic, Jewish experience of God. This preconceived understanding is in no sense denied. But we are required to be open to Jesus' own interpretive experience of the reality of God which he manifests in his humanity.

Of course, the question about Jesus' unique universal significance can only be answered in faith, either positively or negatively. Hence a positive answer essentially has theological relevance; it cannot be simply historical. On the other hand religious statements must have some basis in the history of Jesus; if not, they would be unrelated to reality and therefore ideological. Hence the historical reality of Jesus must have communicated something which people could, might and in the end were compelled to articulate in those religious statements. That something must have been historical, namely that anyone who saw Jesus had indeed seen the Father. Had the gap between these two planes been too great, Christianity would never have stood a chance.[14] On the other hand religious affirmations are always vulnerable in the face of historical findings. Put differently, Jesus' unique universality cannot be historically demonstrated either on the basis of Jesus of Nazareth or through systematic comparison of the world religions. What we have is an affirmation of Christian faith which claims to accord with reality − although that claim is itself an act of faith.

Yet if we affirm a reality, albeit in religious language − that is, something [605]
which is not constituted by us (as believers) but which actually evokes our affirmation and constitutes it as an act of faith − then this historical reality must form the basis of what we say in religious language and at the same time give substance to it. Otherwise our claim would be ideological. In my view, then, the plausibility of the Christian creed can be proven in two ways only: (a) through historical study of Jesus' baptism, his words and deeds, life and death and establishing their possible meaning, and (b) by showing how the Christian claim to universality is actualized in the true humanity that confronts us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Although 'true humanity' is not a concept that can be fully rationalized since its actual substance implies a specific option and viewpoint, one can say that the Christian claim to universality will have to be

[14] J.A.T. Robinson, in *Christ, faith, history,* 48.

proved on the evidence of a real-life manifestation of such humanity. What is at issue is the intrinsic relationship between Jesus of Nazareth and the kingdom of God *and* the salvation and happiness of mankind. In modern terms, the point at issue is the transcendent manifestation of what sociologists call 'significant others'.

The fact that our adapted approach to Jesus of Nazareth entails criticism of our preconceptions and images regarding God and man does not mean that we don't need these as a means to understanding. All modern attempts − K. Rahner, W. Pannenberg, J. Moltmann, P. Tillich and others − to arrive at a meaningful Christology, that is, an intelligible analysis of the universal significance of what is nonetheless a particular historical event follow that route. That is to say, they look for an intermediary between the historically unique Jesus of history and his universal significance, expressed in ancient terms like Christ, Lord and Son of God. Nevertheless all these theologies presuppose human reason as the theoretical capacity to analyse a universal horizon of understanding and action. In many of these christological 'systems' human reason is as it were 'extrapolated' outside its socio-cultural, economic, historical structures and threatens to become a-historical. We have already said that Jesus becomes indispensable only if the really decisive meaning and
[606] purpose of human existence are in fact determined by the historical manifestation of the real Jesus of Nazareth, and our human expectations and projections of what humanness entails are corrected by it; only this specification and this norm provide legitimate scope for our human game of projecting expectations.

B. THE *HUMANUM* WE SEEK

An inquiry into a particular fellow man's existential significance for mankind immediately calls for a distinction between (a) people who − in whatever way − have been confronted in history with the Jesus movement, and (b) people who have never heard of Jesus, or have heard something about him but in a social or personal situation that precluded any real confrontation. The real problem is with the first of these alternatives. If that can be meaningfully resolved, it would provide all the data necessary to find a (missiological) solution to the second alternative as well.

An anthropological truth that can hardly be denied is that every person is a fellow man, receiving and giving in a larger whole of diverse widening circles which ultimately encompass all mankind. Ultimately, therefore, a person can only be understood in the context of the whole, where he has uniquely personal, irreplaceable meaning. The human face which we ourselves never see, and which seems to be there to be looked at by others and to prove our

openness to the other, plainly symbolizes our fundamental dependence on and orientation to others.

Christologically this in itself is an interesting fact; but it is a universally human structure, not a distinctive feature of Jesus of Nazareth. Being human for others is a task built into the structure of our 'human constitution' – which is not to say that we actually do much about it. Hence the question of the concrete realization of this 'being human for others' **i**s very pertinent to Jesus of Nazareth; but it becomes christologically relevant only when the personally unique, particular realization is of such a nature that it becomes a point of reference for the total or definitive meaning of every human life. That is why Jesus as a man for others is an important presupposition and prerequisite for [607] any meaningful, more precise qualification of his christological uniqueness.

An explanation which seeks insight into Jesus' christological significance only in the fact that he verbalized and practised profound, universally human yet simple things accessible to all in such way that they continue to challenge and summon all people of goodwill in search of true humanity, is also correct; its claim is historically demonstrable and accepted even by non-Christians. It is also a presupposition and precondition for making Jesus' christological or universal importance professed in the church's credal statements meaningful and intelligible. Yet other works in the world's religious literature by or about 'founders' of existing religions can make a similar claim. A call to authentic humanity − indeed, every good deed − manifestly has universal significance (with due regard to the inevitable pluralism and socio-historical situation in which that authentic humanity has to be realized here and now). The fact that everything of worth in man doesn't have to differentiate him from other people, but can actually unite him with them[15] is a truth which we often no longer dare utter aloud lest we seem 'odd'. But does such a universal appeal to the humanity uniquely manifested in Jesus reflect his full historical reality? If it refers solely to his uniqueness, it may actually obscure his true originality and uniqueness. After all, our analysis of his message regarding God's reign and his praxis showed that Jesus' cause was certainly the cause of man − but as the cause of *God*. In other words, we do not get to Jesus' real uniqueness if we ignore what was closest to his heart: a God mindful of humanity. Jesus' relationship with God, then, has to be an essential part of the argument.

C. THE HUMAN AND THE RELIGIOUS

In general (quite apart from Jesus) the claim that a religious relationship with God is an essential element of truly human existential options can no longer

[15] Thus, rightly, P. Schoonenberg, in *Geloof bij kenterend getij,* l.c., 178.

[608] rely on universal popular consensus; but it is still culturally, historically and psychologically demonstrable without prejudice to non-theistic humanism. For that matter, one can define and interpret religion – irrespective of its actual contents − as an inalienable attribute of humanity, which, if neutralized or suppressed, resurfaces in disguise, for instance, in modern 'absolutist' myths (such as Progress, Utopia or Ideal State, New Future, with their own representative saints and rituals).[16] Disregard of religion evident in one-track, purely technical/rational culture, for example, constitutes a real danger because it entails a fatal, hence inadmissible impoverishment of human nature, as not only humanistic psychology but also social critics like J. Habermas and L. Kolakowski have demonstrated.[17] Although psychology and critical sociology cannot pronounce on the reality of religious convictions, they can, along with their repudiation on other grounds, establish their perceptual impoverishment, and in areas other than just the religious domain. The result of this impoverishment is objectification of people and things; they become hollow, neutral, useful but valueless. Human feelings cease to be forms of communication with the world; they become insulated inner 'states'. They are de-naturalized and the world is left without a soul.[18]

It follows that religious life has its *own* language and terminology − the 'language of faith'. So far we have said only that, because of its humanity, a religious relationship with a transcendent, all-encompassing reality has universal significance. More than that: via this humanity God's relation with man is the ultimate foundation of a potential universality which addresses all men and concerns all persons. The *immediate* basis of the universality of the religious lies in our humanity, but *ultimately* and ontologically primarily in the reality of God as creator of all things and all men; in other words, in the monotheism that professes God's creative and saving nearness. Put differently: the real justification and foundation of the universality of a religion lies in the religious person's affirmation of the reality of God's universal love for men or the affirmation that the cause of man somehow coincides with the cause of God. Universal religion, then, is that which confesses the universal love for men of the one creative, God who is near at hand.

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[16] See W. Dupré, 'Wat is religie?', in *Toekomst van de religie: Religie van de totkomst* (Bruges-Utrecht 1972), 9-27; this H.M.M. Fortmann has also shown in his numerous works; see P. A. van Gennip, *Het verminkte midden* (Bilthoven 1972).

[17] According to J. Habermas failure to hold the great religious traditions in remembrance almost inevitably leads to a decay or collapse of the fundamental strata of assured identity (*'Der fundamentalen Schichten der Identitätssicherung': Philosophisch-politische Profile,* Frankfurt 1971, 35); in similar vein L. Kolakowski, 'Der Anspruch auf die selbstverschuldete Unmündigkeit', in *Vom Sinn der Tradition* (Munich 1970), 1-18.

[18] See also J. Weima, *Wat willen we met de toekomst doen?* (Bilthoven 1972); E. Schillebeeckx, 'Naar een "definitieve toekomst": belofte en menselijke be-middeling', in *Toekomst van de religie: religie van de toekomst,* l.c., (37-55).

But the message of the vital necessity of a religious relationship with God is a universal claim made by all (monotheistic) religions, hence not peculiar to Jesus of Nazareth and the Jesus movement. In general, then, the religious [609] relationship with God (and with the whole of reality) cannot be called specifically Christian. The religious connotes ultimacy and totality, self-transcendence in love; it has to do with the acceptance of universal meaning, hence fundamental belief in reality as ultimately benevolent − in reality as compassion (as Tibetan religions put it). This, expressed in many human modulations, appears to be the affirmation of all religious experience as a dimension of authentic human existence.

In the actual history of peoples, however, this dimension is experienced and articulated in all kinds of distinctive disclosure or discovery experiences within the structure of their own culture. Hence the existence of different religions, each in its own way intent on sorting out the history of sense and non-sense, of the search for salvation, happiness and liberation and the experience of guilt and suffering.

The original uniqueness of Jesus of Nazareth, at any rate as envisaged in the Christian creed, cannot be reduced to this general problem of religious monotheism or to the problem of God and experiences of God. That would reduce Jesus to a mere ***chiffre*** or cipher of God's universal saving activity in human history as a whole or one of many prophets of the religious relationship with God. Any original uniqueness in Jesus, who undeniably came to the Jews with a religious message, must be sought in the uniqueness of that message and his corresponding praxis, in other words in the distinctiveness of Jesus' experience of God as the source and soul of his message and ministry. In light of the foregoing, then, we need to determine whether God's universal love for men came to us in and through a human, personal, historically particular figure called Jesus of Nazareth. What it boils down to is the Christian modulation of the universal religious theme of God's saving nearness.

It also implies that Christian religious uniqueness cannot adopt an exclusive attitude towards other religions; after all, it is a matter of Christian uniqueness within the universal religious theme of God's (universal) redeeming nearness, which most religions profess in their own way. Only if Christian uniqueness and identity are to some extent specified can we meaningfully inquire into Christianity's relationship with non-Christian religions. That raises a [610] hermeneutic problem. The identity − the original uniqueness − of Jesus and his movement, the church, cannot be pinned down to some immutable, eternal essence. For if Jesus does have universal significance for today, his relation to the present age must enter into our description of his original identity; and then this, *our* description of that identity, is also the interpretive *act of faith* in which I confess Jesus as universally unique. Even so, it is not I who constitute

him as universally unique; I merely assent to the Jesus who thus reveals himself to me. So the process of defining his unique universality in fact entails constructing a contemporary Christology, which is nothing but a Christian credal interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth as God's offer of salvation to all.

Hence if religiosity means the experience and articulation of man's relationship with the transcendent, and at the same time the relationship of the Absolute with man, one may say that every experience of God, however conditioned by socio-historical factors, tends to become a universal religion of mankind with its own distinctive dynamics. Yet we find that many religions do not experience themselves in this way but, lacking all missionary fervour, leave people to their own religions. Indeed, some religions were intrinsically tied to a particular clan or culture. Rome and Greece never imposed their Olympic gods on the territories they occupied, except when the Roman emperor was deified as a divine *raison d'état;* but that was more of a political ideology, indicative of universal imperialism rather than universal religiosity. Albeit not without some conflict, many non-Christian religions are more strongly linked to their particular culture, which counteracts the internal dynamics to become a universal human religion. Hence a universal religion for all people, in the face of all inculturation in diverse cultures, has to uphold a fundamental proviso − in the sense of transcendence − towards every culture, including its own cultural articulations, but at the same time (albeit in historically contingent terms) exemplify genuine cultural humanity.

Yet we should not overlook the fact that the nature and substance of a religion can be universal even if its founder or actual inspirer − for instance, John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth − did not directly address their message
[611] to mankind as a whole, or did not even have any explicit intention to found a new world religion. A religion which proclaims that God is the salvation of all without discrimination of any sort is by its very nature intensely universal, even if − as in Jesus' case − the universality is proclaimed only in the context of Israel. This shows that when it comes to universality a historical intermediary is essential. Still, we must not too hastily dismiss, on theological grounds, the significance of the historically certain fact that Jesus confined his message to his own people, the house of Israel, even if his actual preaching and ministry contained elements that enabled him, a Jew, to break out of the particularism of Judaism.

Jesus' life and death undeniably form part of concrete human history; thus the Jesus events are linked with what came before and what followed upon and from them. As such they are a legitimate object of a historically illuminating study. In this context we can even ascribe unique historical importance to these events relative to later events, namely the rise of Christianity and the Christian churches: no Jesus, no Christianity. But this

unique significance is always relative, that is relative to the church. Mohammed, too, has historically unique significance for the rise of Islam.[19] *Historically* unique significance of this sort is essentially relative. However, when we speak of Jesus' significance for human history as a whole, we are no longer speaking 'historically'; having significance for the whole of history includes the future as well − and as such it lies beyond historiography.

Conclusion. From this initial exploration we conclude that the distinctive, specifically Christian element would have to be such that it simultaneously unites all human beings, and does so in freedom, in such a way that the truly religious will to some extent be evident in the human dimension. In other words: (a) the universal significance of Jesus can only be considered if it is substantiated in and by the universal phenomenon of our humanity; (b) if the Christian profession of Jesus' universal significance is not ideological but an affirmation of reality, something in his history must point in that direction; the subject to which this universality is ascribed is, after all, a historical man, Jesus of Nazareth. In other words, the historical person of Jesus must provide grounds for such a confession. A historical truth that is grounded exclusively [612] in a dogmatic or theological postulate ceases to be a historical truth; (c) finally, if Jesus' universal significance has to be substantiated by the universal phenomenon of humaneness, we face the problem of finding a universal hermeneutic horizon (albeit not open to theorizing) as prerequisite for a credal affirmation that Jesus is the Lord of all, in whom everyone can find salvation. And that poses a further problem: is a universal preconception at all rationally definable? Can the question of a definitive meaning of human life be rationally objectivized?

[19] In *Christ, faith, history,* 31-32.

Chapter 2

THE HISTORY OF HUMAN SUFFERING IN SEARCH OF MEANING AND LIBERATION

§1 The problem of 'universal history'

The concept of universal history is often used as an essential bridging factor in a christological synthesis. The notion is fundamentally religious and theological, but once its religious origin is acknowledged, we can also define its rational meaning more accurately.

Both historians and philosophers use the category 'universal history' − but with a very special connotation. For universal history per se is not a reality but a conceptual postulate, *une idée de raison*. For the historian it is a presupposition, in the sense of a prior judgment in the strict sense, which he as a historian does not probe. In this sense the concept simply requires him to trace significant connections. He should not and cannot proceed on the assumption that people, groups and cultures are hermetically sealed units; his implicit assumption is that despite all impediments and imperfections communication is always possible. The universal hermeneutic horizon of historical interpretation, then, expressed in very general but real terms, is human existence as the potential**ity** for reciprocal communication. From that [613]
perspective the oneness of human history is presupposed in all meaningful historical study.

But from a philosophical standpoint this historical presupposition requires critical scrutiny. Indirectly P. Ricoeur has helped greatly to clarify the problem by distinguishing two extreme borderline types in traditional philosophy of history.[1] (a) The so-called 'Hegelian type' or unitary system (*Identitätsdenken*): here the entire body of divergent philosophies is seen as a single philosophy, of which particular, concrete historical philosophies are only elements.

[1] P. Ricoeur, *Histoire et vérité* (Paris 1955), ed. 3, undated, 66-80: 'Histoire de la philosophie et historicity'.

Understanding, then, is to understand the totality ('*Das Wahre ist das Ganze*'). When history happens we assume a priori that this sign of humanity can be grasped, can be understood; it can be connected to the broad spectrum of humanity; this is the preconception of all historical study, the historian's prejudgment. (b) Secondly, there is the pluralistic type: each philosophical system has to be understood in its own right as a particular philosophy and not as an element of a 'universal mind' (thus no 'isms'!).

We find that both types come up against an impassable frontier. If the Hegelian type were to realize its ideal, it would end by dissolving history in a system; in that case there is no longer any real history. But even Hegel himself never attained this cherished unitary system. If, on the other hand, the pluralistic type were achieve its objective, history would be dissolved in a host of mutually inaccessible, unrelated and fragmented particularities, in other words, in a schizophrenic universe or a pool of supra-temporal, separate, coexisting essences. But this type also never succeeds in realizing its own intention and at best must content itself with typological approximations (for example: 'Spinoza is a pantheist'). Thus both the unitary system and thoroughgoing particularized essences destroy living history. Both 'logic' (logos) and 'pure facticity' put paid to real history! (It is noteworthy, therefore, that a system of universal history − hermeneutic key to the understanding of Christianity − also, in essence, postulates 'the end of history' – a case in point is W. Pannenberg.)[2] Even so, these two readings or interpretive approaches to history satisfy two requirements and expectations and, finally, two models of truth.[3] The first approach, which seeks to understand history by way of the
[614] totality, is expected to yield 'the emergence of meaning', for rationality reveals meaningful relations in history. The other side of this rationality principle, however, is that a substantial residue will slip through the meshes of the rational system – one could call it historical leftovers. But '*ce déchet est justement l'histoire*'.[4] There is, in fact, un-meaningful history; there is non-sense in our history: violence, lust for power, coveting at the expense of others, enslavement and oppression; there is Auschwitz, and goodness knows what else in the private sphere and in our personal lives. All that indeed falls outside the 'logos' that the historian looks for in history – so much the worse for concrete historical experience! What we overlook, however, is this: not only is the real non-sense in history disregarded and left out of account, but a priori the real possibility of 'a different meaning' in history is ignored![5] So in recent years a type of historiography has emerged − we might call it 'anti-history' –

[2] See the discussion between I. Berten and W. Pannenberg, in I. Berten, *Histoire, révélation et foi* (Brussels 1969), 107-108.
[3] Ricoeur, l.c., 69.
[4] L.c.
[5] 'Une autre façon d'avoir du sens' (Ricoeur, l.c., 70-71).

whose express object of study is these very 'historical leftovers'.[6]

Anyone, then, open to the sense and non-sense manifested in history cannot be 'Hegelian'; both possibilities − the meaning discovered (at the expense of a lot of reality) by the Hegelians, and the potential 'different meaning' (which takes into account all the 'non-sense') − have an equal claim and are not reducible to a unitary system. To say that a particular philosophy (e.g. that of Aristotle, Kant or Spinoza) is just an element of 'a universal mind' is a forcible encroachment on the distinctiveness of each thinker, whatever his socio-historical situation.

Between the Charybdis of insistence on totality and the Scylla of reverence for historical particularity and uniqueness there is only one possible meaningful perspective: the requirement to communicate, dialogue instead of totality, hence a ban on any pretension to reduce 'the other' to a constituent of my 'total discourse'. The place to look for truth, then, is humanity-as-possibility-of-communication.[7]

This possibility of two readings of history, which – taken to their logical conclusion − result in absurdity, that is, in the demolition of true history, nonetheless discloses a dual aspect of history itself: each history is a manifestation of meaning (it lends itself to the establishing of meaningful relations) as well as a manifestation of unfathomable, irreducible uniqueness, to which unitary thinking gives no access. Without embracing the totality principle, we must concede that whatever is articulated by human beings must [615] form a coherent whole, accessible to one's fellow men. This is why we rightly speak of history, in the singular. The *system*, as an unattainable borderline understanding of history, shows us that the plurality of histories are 'potentially one';[8] to put it more precisely: the question of universal meaning, qua question, is inevitably given (arising not just out of human thinking but out of historical *reality* as such). On the other hand we are actually confronted with histories (in the plural): of people, groups, races, cultures. Moreover, we are just as aware of this pluralism as we are of the potential unity. It follows that the reality which occurs in history manifests itself both as potential unity and as insurmountable plurality of events. In other words, the problem of the universal meaning of history per se (historically elucidated by human reason) is both *insuperable* and *insoluble*. This in fact shows us the intrinsic nature of history: it is a field of ambiguity; history is real, contingent human history only insofar as it is neither absolutely one nor absolutely plural. The real history of human beings occurs where sense and non-sense exist side by side, overlay

[6] E.g. F. Fanon, *Damnés de la terre* (Paris 1968); R. Jaulin, *La paix blanche* (Paris 1970); N. Wachtel, *La vision des vaincus: les Indiens du Perou devant la conquête espagnole 1536-1570* (Paris 1967).
[7] E. Lévinas, 'La philosophie et l'idée de l'infini', in RMM 62 (1957), 241-53; 'Liberté de commandement', in RMM 58 (1953), 264-273.
[8] Ricoeur, l.c., 77.

each other and intermingle, where there is joy and suffering, laughter and tears − in short: finitude. Human history is ambiguous, with flashes of light and clouds of impenetrable darkness, a realm of knowing and unknowing. The coexistence of sense and non-sense in history – hence history itself − cannot be completely rationalized; the meaning of history is not accessible to theory. History is 'the realm of the inexact',[9] and therefore amenable only to inexact methods. The end of history, in the sense of its boundary and termination, reveals not the meaning of history, but that our question about its meaning is as inevitable as it is rationally insoluble.

If history presents itself concretely as a tangle of sense and non-sense, the question arises: which prevails in the end, sense or non-sense? And how? Or is it a story without limits, for ever indeterminately open? Or does this aporia pose the question: should we not change and make a different history? That, at any rate, seems a sensible first resolve: let us try and make more meaningful history! The question is, *can* we? Can we overcome *every* form of evil, of suffering? Can we prevent every natural disaster, conquer death itself? ... Thus a further question seems justified: does human history not perhaps confront us with a theological problem – the problem of creation, salvation and covenant, so that non-theoretical but absolute confidence in the meaning of history, entrusted and promised to us [606] in spite of everything (the real possibility of universal and single meaning), can only be endorsed with God as starting-
[616] point, in commitment to *the* Mystery? In that case rebellion against all forms of evil and suffering, in whatever guise they appear, should be prerequisite for (if not the hidden reverse side of) authentic faith in God and sincere confession of Christ. At the same time the historical manifestation of Jesus, in whom, according to the Christian creed, the promise of possible total meaning is concretely given, shows us that this ardent, assertive yet nonviolent opposition to all forms of evil itself provokes violent opposition, because it contradicts the self-interest of powerful people or groups; in the end the one who proclaimed the glad tidings of goodwill to all and universal peace was himself put to death! This tells us something about the impossibility of theorizing about Christian redemption through Jesus' suffering and death.

It follows that Christian faith in God prohibits all premature attempts, whether theoretical or practical, to establish a totality of meaning, any unitary system and totalitarian programme of action that professes to be able to realize the meaning of history. The meaning of history of which Christianity speaks, as embodied in Jesus of Nazareth, is both the promise of total meaning (on the basis of which Christians do not identify what has already been achieved with the promised eschatological meaning, nor feel discouraged by failures and

[9] L.c., 79.

even fatal fiascos) and a prophetic or critical source of authoritative judgment on all premature totalitarian projects (worldly or ecclesiastic).

This raises the question of the relationship between the history of suffering and salvation history. One part of our history − the segment occupied by the life and death of Jesus − cannot possibly determine the whole of it, unless this life (up to and including death) does in some sense condense the total meaning of history as an eschatological event, even though history continues.

§2 Impossibility of theorizing ultimate meaning and of a universal hermeneutic horizon

Particular experience of meaning, it has been argued, is logically possible only if based on an inevitable implicit demand for total meaning because of the logical implication of a potential total meaning. Hence the meaning of [617] historical events becomes fully and definitively evident only in the perspective of the universal, ultimate meaning of history as a whole – if that actually exists. Particular experiences of meaning only imply the demand for universal meaning. But they do not logically imply that 'universal history' necessarily has to signify final, positive meaning, hence salvation. Logos and actual fact are locked in an irresolvable contradiction, and history remains ambiguous: we cannot rationally and theoretically anticipate universal total meaning. Since historical evolution has not been concluded, every particular experience of meaning is subject to fundamental uncertainty which neither philosophy nor science can resolve.

Now the question of universal meaning, implied in all partial experiences of meaning as well as in protesting contrast experience in the same history, is confronted with the phenomenon of 'religions'. In religious experience a specific, universal ultimate meaning − the *eschaton* of history − is formulated and confessed. Thus Christianity speaks of Jesus Christ as the ultimate meaning of all history. That is a profession of faith. The question is whether human reason is open to a critical, rational understanding of this divine revelation − and in such a way that faith, for its part, cannot entrench itself in a storm-free zone and exempt itself from critical inquiry.

Elsewhere, in an admittedly unfinished essay, I postulated that in theological thinking what religious faith posits as a conviction and a thesis functions as a 'hypothesis', which in some way needs to be tested on the material of human experience.[10] This means that the at any rate implicit demand for total meaning emerging from the analysis of particular historical experiences of meaning is not *identical* with the Christian affirmation of total

[10] See *Geloofsverstaan: interpretatie en kritiek* (ET: *The understanding of faith,* Vol. 5 of this series) Bloemendaal 1972, 211-216, especially 214.

meaning in Jesus Christ. It is an open question, because the implication of total meaning does clarify any demonstrable, specific form in which that meaning is realized and is not merely a logical implication. Reflecting on it, the theologian, hypothetically at first, identifies the Christian creed as a response corroborating the logically implied ultimate meaning as a reality, a specific answer to the demand for universal meaning. From the standpoint of theology as a scholarly discipline this initial identification is provisional and hypothetical. The theologian must verify (or falsify) the hypothesis in terms of
[618] the concrete data of human historical experience.[11] That is the only way that theologians as scholars can rebut the charge of reasoning in a closed 'hermeneutic circle' which presupposes what still has to be critically tested. For nothing is taken for granted: as in every scholarly discipline, one simply works with a hypothesis which needs to be tested. Naturally this testing will differ from the verification of hypotheses and theories in the physical sciences; it is not direct and will never be apodictically cogent; nonetheless it has to be verifiable if theology is to make meaningful, non-ideological pronouncements and qualify as a scientific discipline. There must be a method to ascertain whether the hypothesis finds support in our experience and whether in so doing it opens up a future for all.

Whether God**'s** saving activity in fact takes place in Jesus of Nazareth must to some extent be experientially provable and expressible in religious language. For if, as Christianity confesses, God is the ultimate all-determining reality (for now still in a broad sense without specifying its actual substance, e.g. almighty love displayed in 'weakness'), then in this worldview no earthly reality can be fully understood without reference to God; then God opens up a deeper understanding of all reality. It follows that the theologian's 'hypothesis' (the thesis of faith) must in some (non-apodictic but meaningful) way be testable and find support in human reality, the human world and society − in short, in our historical experience.

I realized some time ago already that this entails a clear break with the 'implicit intuition' of the totality of meaning propounded by classical philosophers like D. de Petter, L. Lavelle and the French *philosophes de l'esprit.* This tradition (not without solid grounds in Thomas Aquinas's worldview) brilliantly analyses the *participation* of total meaning in every particular experience of meaning. Thomas could blithely – and rightly, at the time − endorse this view in medieval (patristic) society, where a single (Christian) destiny for human life − the beatific vision of God − was a self-evident social truth with (sociologically) appropriate plausibility structures. Today, in our society where divergent ideologies and worldviews compete in the 'common

[11] What in particular brought me to state explicitly the implications of my own essay was an article by W. Pannenberg, 'The nature of a theological statement', in *Zygon* 7 (1972), 6-19.

market' of world history, that is not possible. Hence the concept of participation has to be replaced by the idea of anticipation of total meaning in the midst of a history still in the making. The result is that each specific or [619] identificatory, anticipated total meaning (whether of the Christian eschaton, the classless society of the future or J. Habermas's ideal democratic society with its non-coercive communication) can only present itself to the forum of critical reason (in the first instance) as a 'hypothesis', whose cognitive value – hence reality and truth value − has to be tested on the material of human historical experience. These experiences will prove or disprove the provisional anticipation of total meaning (Christian, Marxist, critical social theory, etc.) before the forum of critical reflection, in an at any rate rationally meaningful if not rationally cogent way (as is the case in the physical sciences; but they have no monopoly on scientific status). In saying this I am aware that a scientific approach is only one of many human potentialities and strengths, and certainly not the only effectual one − even relatively. But it is an inalienable right of critical reason; and therefore no faith can evade it by invoking the pseudo-argument that God and religion belong to a super- or extra-scientific plane of human existence without losing its plausibility. In essence they actually belong to such a plane; and one cannot define the heart of a religion in terms of its functional meaning for man and his society. No direct verification, therefore, is possible; but indirectly it is, in the decisive impact of faith in God on human experience: that is to say, religion is tested on its own implications (hence indirectly, yet in no sense 'extrinsically'). Thus demonstrating the personal, socio-political, secular, historical relevance of the Christian faith (in a critical approach to society and culture) becomes an indirect test of faith-motivated statements.

So the question of the universal significance of Jesus of Nazareth finds its proper context in the universal hermeneutic horizon which, although in itself resistant to theorizing, is included (as a logical implication) in negative contrast experiences and particular experiences of meaning − hence in the horizon of the question forced upon us by history itself concerning the ultimate sense or non-sense of our human history and the nature of that sense or non-sense. That is our question, because the process of our history evokes it in our minds, a process which is, after all, a variegated, pluralistic record with a potential unity (whatever concrete verbal expression one may give this fundamental existential theme; for there are many possible approaches to what presents [620] itself as the crucial problem of human life). Of special importance, it seems to me, is the fact continually confronting us − that of unaccommodated, innocent suffering, in short, the story of human suffering, those dark stains that cannot be assigned any rational or theoretical place. Human suffering and the problem of evil go hand in hand with our history as a permanently thriving

'epiphenomenon' of our 'situated' freedom. Philosophy and theology alike are left speechless and confounded by the complexity of evil and human suffering caused by nature, persons and structures. There is too much innocent and senseless suffering to rationalize this calamity ethically, hermeneutically or ontologically. And history testifies to man's inability to realize his dream of a pristine society free from suffering.

The salvation that Jesus offered was rejected, moreover, because of our age-old yet ever new human and social praxis, which sweeps away everything and everyone that does not fit into its pattern. The offer of religious salvation is − paradoxically − the condition of its potential rejection. Only thus was the *religious* implication of such rejection revealed in its ethical profundity that cannot be rationally plumbed or measured. We rightly speak of a demonic strain in our history which, despite occasional partial amelioration, constantly recurs: a fundamental human impotence dogs our finest intentions and achievements. The hard facts of history offer no guarantee or hope that ultimate shalom and reconciliation are possible. We humans are capable of making our history flourish or founder. Given our negative contrast experiences, shalom, universal meaning and reconciliation can only be articulated in parables and eschatological symbols, in images of promise and wrath, ultimately of God's kingdom or reign, of forgiveness and *metanoia.* The rejection of proffered salvation is not theoretically explicable, because in the final analysis profound evil is incomprehensible and eludes every theory; it will not fit into any ontological or philosophical unitary system. The only adequate response is a *praxis* of resistance to evil, not a theory about it. Hence belief in a universal meaning of history cannot be pinned down in a philosophically interpreted, 'universal history'; it is only realized in a praxis that tries to overcome evil and suffering on the strength of the religious
[621] promise that things can be otherwise. Evil and suffering are a dark stain on our history which no one can remove or explain, which we cannot reconcile with a theodicy or ever erase with social critique and the resultant praxis (however necessary). How then can we rationally and hermeneutically analyse and express the 'universal meaning' of history, of which evil and suffering are such massive components?

Contrast experience, however, especially in memories of man's actual history of accumulated suffering, has its own critical, cognitive value and force,[12] which are not reducible to a purposive *Herrschaftwissen* (the controlling knowledge typical of science and technology) or to diverse forms of

[12] E. Schillebeeckx, 'Naar een "definitieve toekomst": belofte en menselijke bemiddeling', in *Toekomst van de religie: religie van de toekomst?* (Bruges 1972), especially 48-53; and the well-known memoria articles by J.B. Metz, in particular: 'Zukunft aus dem Gedächtnis des Leidens', in Conc (1972), n. 6, German ed. 399-407.

contemplative, aesthetic and playful, 'aimless' knowledge. The proper cognitive value of the contrast experience of unjust suffering is critical of all forms of premature contemplative as well as exclusively scientific and technological knowledge. It is critical of purely contemplative total perception and every theoretical unitary system, because they already start from universal reconciliation; but it is equally critical of the world-manipulating knowledge of science and technology insofar as they postulate man only as the controlling subject and disregard the ethical priority to which the sufferers among us are entitled.

The distinctive cognitive value of suffering is not only critical of the two positive forms of human knowledge; dialectically it can also form a link between the contemplative and actively controlling cognitive potentialities of the human psyche. I even believe that only the contrast experience of suffering (with its implicit ethical demand) can forge an intrinsic bond between the two, because it alone possesses characteristics of both forms of knowledge. For on the one hand experiences of suffering befall man, even though this form of 'lived' experience is negative, very different from the equally 'lived' but positive joyousness of contemplative, ludic and aesthetic experiences. On the other hand, with respect to contrast experience or critical negativity, suffering lays a bridge to potential praxis aimed at removing both the suffering and its causes. Because of this intrinsic affinity, albeit critically negative, with both contemplative and nature-regulating knowledge, I call the cognitive force of suffering practico-critical, that is, a critical faculty prompting a new praxis, which opens up a better future and actually realizes it (even though one cannot be sure that it will succeed).

This means that − given our human condition and our concrete social culture − only ethical critique of mankind's accumulated history of suffering can, paradoxically yet truly and intrinsically, connect contemplation and action with potential realization of meaning. After all, as a contrast experience man's experience of suffering presupposes an implicit yearning for happiness, for salvation or healing; and as unjust suffering it implies at least a vague consciousness of what human integrity or positive wholeness should entail. In other words, as contrast experience it implies indirectly a positive summons from and to the *humanum.* Anyone who examines the conditions that permit contrast experiences, which engender new, imperative tasks, can confirm that such negative experiences include a positive, if as yet unarticulated, sense of value, at the same time disclosing it and demanding its expression in good conscience, which begins to protest. The absence of what ought to be is indirectly apprehended in the negative experience, and so one gets a glimpse of what has to be done here and now, still hazily but nonetheless unmistakably. In that sense acts designed to overcome suffering are only [622]

possible by virtue of an at least implicit or confused anticipation of possible universal meaning yet to be realized.

In contrast to the goal-directed knowledge of science and technology and the 'goal-less' knowledge of contemplation (intrinsically meaningful, not pointing beyond itself), the cognitive value of contrast experience of suffering is knowledge that demands a future and opens it up. Besides the foregoing concepts 'goal-directed' and 'goal-less' (in the sense of intrinsically meaningful), the notion of 'future' now enters into our quest for a universal pre-understanding in which the question about Jesus can find a comprehensible answer. The history of human suffering also possesses critical cognitive force that calls for a praxis that will open up a future. Contrast experiences of suffering, then, are negative, dialectical awareness of a longing and a demand for meaning and real freedom, salvation and happiness to come.

In this as yet unfinished human history of suffering in quest of meaning, liberation and salvation, Jesus of Nazareth presented himself with a message and praxis of salvation, a fellow man who nevertheless, through his new praxis and innocent suffering and death on the cross, gave us a new and renewing
[623] reading of our old history. Its effect is to reveal that the factor linking the historical man Jesus with his significance for us now is, concretely, a Christian life praxis in ongoing human history. Without the churches' solidarity with suffering human beings, whoever or whatever they may be, their gospel becomes implausible and incomprehensible. A universal hermeneutic horizon of understanding, therefore, demands a human liberated freedom, a praxis that is actually liberating. This does not tell us what real freedom and humanity consist in. The universal horizon within which the question and answer concerning Jesus of Nazareth become generally accessible to all is a very concrete demand for the *humanum* − a demand which no doctrine (not even that of Christianity) can satisfy by anticipating the future. (It can only be answered by way of searching, largely empirical initiatives. Whether man will succeed in this is not inscribed in our history.)

How does Jesus of Nazareth fit into this history of human suffering in quest of meaning, liberation and salvation? From the foregoing it is clear that Jesus' universal significance cannot be affirmed directly by objectivizing an abstraction without considering the concrete effects of his history. Those effects are discernible mainly in a historically demonstrable, hope inspiring, liberating Christian praxis. In addition we must not only inquire into the universal preconception, shared by all human beings, of what Jesus conveyed, but should also stress that the church, the vehicle of the Jesus tradition, must listen to the world if it is to get its gospel message across. It is not just a matter of determining mankind's universal preconceptions so that everyone might heed Jesus' message as something that concerns them profoundly; the churches of

Christ must also respect the world's right to be 'world' and must note what the world has to say and is already doing for the wellbeing and happiness of men. Then 'the world' may have the freedom to listen to what the Christian gospel has to say to it. Historical mankind's concrete question to the gospel today is: what do Jesus' message and praxis contribute to the overall effort of liberating humanity in the full sense of the word?

Human freedom is not a purely inner affair. It is a bodily, extroverted freedom, realized only in an encounter of truly free people in liberating social services and structures. Of ourselves we are just a potentiality for freedom; the [624] freedom is still void, without substance. Culture fills the void creatively, but no single form or degree of culture can fill it completely. Freedom concretely realized is constantly interiorized; that is to say, inner freedom depends on encounter with free persons in social structures that permit it and protect it. The social dimension is an essential component of inwardly free action; it helps to constitute our experience of ourselves and of the world. Liberated freedom thus surmounts the dualistic distinction between inward and outward. There is a constitutive relation between personal identity and collective consensus or recognition, between inner freedom and liberating social structures.

Liberation or salvation, then, is the conquest of all human, personal and social alienation: it is the wholeness of man, human life and human history. Individuals and society are interrelated in an irreducible dialectical tension. The 'void' of our freedom is never totally filled by culture. There always remains a further possibility, an openness. On the one hand we cannot say that society is the transcendental, all-encompassing horizon of reality, for that would disregard the unimpeachability of the human person, who is not simply a product of the social process. But neither is personal interiority with its necessary privacy and intimacy a transcendental, all-encompassing horizon. As a result human alienation cannot be fully overcome on a personal or a social plane; 'liberated freedom' or true wellbeing transcends both person and society. There is human hurt for which no socio-political cure exists; the best of social structures may still be fragmenting and alienating; optimal structures do not automatically turn human beings into good, mature, humane people. Nature can be humanized and yet remain largely and ineluctably alien (think of death!); and finally there is our inescapable finitude, which can be a source of faith in God, but also of loneliness and anxiety. Hence making some worldly factor lord and master of man's total wellbeing is the beginning of tyranny.

Ultimate reconciliation of the dichotomy of our existence can only be achieved by an operative reality that *includes* person and society, that is, all of reality, without violating it.[13] That makes it possible to link the question of

[13] Sharply formulated by W. Kasper, *Einführung in den Glauben* (Mainz 1972), in these terms: ' ... eine Grösze . .. welche das Ganze umgreift und eint, ohne es zu vergewaltigen' (110).

salvation and liberation with the question of God, of salvation imparted by
[625] God. Only absolute freedom that is at the same time creative love seems capable of realizing universal reconciliation. That brings us to the question whether acknowledgment, in practice, of God 'being God' is not also recognition of man's humanity, which is the core of Jesus' message: God's rule or lordship oriented to man. Despite the historical failure of this message Jesus attested his indestructible assurance of God's salvation, grounded in an exceptional *Abba* experience. For us it entails a promise from God that human salvation and wholeness are possible and that human life is ultimately meaningful. Thus faith in Jesus makes it possible to affirm simultaneously the two theoretically irreconcilable aspects of human history: evil and suffering, *and* salvation or wellbeing. That enables, allows and obliges us to give wellbeing and goodness the final say in a way that is grounded in Jesus, because the Father is greater than all suffering and greater than our inability to experience ultimate reality as a trustworthy gift.

Section Three

JESUS, PARABLE OF GOD AND PARADIGM OF HUMANITY

Chapter 1

GOD'S SAVING ACTION IN HISTORY

§1 Historical discourse and discourse in religious language

A lot of people have problems with expressions such as 'God acts in history'. Is this mythological discourse? That is to say, is one actually speaking, albeit in mythological language, not about God but about man, so that in an age of critical awareness the reality to which it refers can be expressed more aptly in purely human categories? Or are we truly saying something about God himself, even if in human, inadequate, merely evocative and suggestive language (at a conceptual level called 'analogous')?

Discourse about God is never unambiguous. At most it is 'analogous', indirect: taking the world and humanity as our point of departure, we are saying something about God, but using concepts and expressions which can only be verified in earthly reality. After all, God does not act in history as man does. In our modern experience history, set in a context of natural history, is made by men; and it is not, as the ancients thought, the plaything of supra-mundane good or evil spirits. Within cosmic nature, which to a great extent remains alien to them, (persistently surviving) men − I do not say 'mankind', which is an abstraction and cannot be an *acting* subject − are themselves acting subjects of history. Thus speaking historically about history is not the same as speaking about that same history in religious language. If we say that God acts [627]
in history, we are using historical – not religious − language. Even so, the history discussed in religious language is the same history of which the historiographer speaks. Religious language has a function quite distinct from historical discourse, with a logic of its own. In both cases we are talking about *our* history, made by human beings, but when speaking about it historically we are not working with a God concept; that would simply be an expression of beliefs held by the people we are studying.

It follows that God's activity in history is not by way of intervention, the outcome of which the historian should be able to measure and verify. God's

acts are, of course, divine, that is, absolute, transcendent, creative. But this so far transcendent activity could not be described as acts in history if God's absolute initiative could not also be immanent in our history without forfeiting its transcendence; in other words, immanence is not a link in the totality of this-worldly historical factors which constitute history, yet is nonetheless real. It is an activity which does not rank among the activities of free persons that history is anyway. Yet in speaking of it we are saying, in religious language, something about *God* − not just about man's attitude towards him, for example the love or obedience man owes him; we are also affirming God to be such that he evokes love and deserves adoration. If God is indeed 'wholly Other' without any recognizable immanence in our world, then the best way to worship him would be to say nothing about him. The very fact that God the wholly Other is the creator means that he is also ultimate, intimate and very near. All this implies that one way or another God's transcendent, creative activity will come to expression in our world; otherwise there would be no ground, no occasion even, to speak about God's acts in history − not even in an evocative, analogous way. The transcending act which is God would be something we could not so much as speak about − not even in religious language – if it did not manifest itself in day-to-day earthly life. Speaking about God's acts in history in religious language has an experiential basis − albeit one that only faith can interpret − in our human situation in the world and in history. Our talk about God's transcendence is grounded in our own contingency; religious language draws its material from contingent experience in a disclosure that opens up deeper perspectives.

[628] But if for believers the world and history actually constitute the field of God's activity, evocatively communicated to us, then religious discourse (or religious language) and scientific discourse, however much they may differ, have something in common; both are talking about the same reality: our world and our history. If the discourse of, say, the physical sciences or history is true, living nature and our history must intrinsically be such that they provide a real basis and substance for scientific and historical discourse. But by the same token this same world and history must intrinsically be such as to provide a basis and substance for religious language and theological discourse. In other words, there must be traces in history to permit and enable us to speak accountably in religious language about God's saving activity in history.[1]

Speaking in religious language means that the human relevance of what is said about nature and history in 'profane' scientific language also has religious relevance, is ultimately relevant to God and our relationship to him. Religious language adds nothing new, no 'new information', to what nonreligious lan-

[1] See Peter R. Baelz, 'A deliberate mistake?', in *Christ, faith, history,* 13-34; cf. Sch. Ogden, *The reality of God and other essays* (London 1957), ch. 6, 164-187.

guage has already said (where would it get such new information from?), but it does articulate and analyse the non-divine or contingent character of a reality already rendered discussable; it sees in it as in a shadow the passing of the creative God – like Moses of old, who did not see God's face but only his back after he had already passed by.

§2 Revelation or God's salvation-historical acts as experienced and articulated in religious language

A. GOD'S CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN OUR WORLD: 'HUMAN PERSON' AND 'BEING OF GOD'

Believers speak of man as 'created' by God; by which they mean that at the deepest level man derives his entire existence and activity from the creator God. He is, as it were, 'first' from God and only in and through that, himself; his existence and life are 'grounded' in God: his whole life is borne by the inexhaustible freedom of God, who in transcendent fashion literally gives man [629]
to himself. Hence if it is evident in 'profane' speech that man is a person, this, expressed in religious language, signifies that he is a person by virtue of God's transcending, active immanence. God is immanent through transcendence: that is to say, everything positive about a person is genuinely of himself − but derives from God. Although genuinely distinct from God, fundamentally a human person cannot be contrasted to God. Hence the ground of the distinction between God and man (creature) must lie on man's side, not God's, and even then not in what he positively is but only in the fact that he does not have his positive human existence in and of himself; in other words, the ground of the real distinction between God and man lies in human finitude. Finitude is what distinguishes creatures from God, including their positive being. So we cannot juxtapose God and man as two beings in competition with each other. Nevertheless God falls outside the description and definition of what a human being is, while man derives his being wholly from God. Thus 'humanity' is a highly specific, substantive description of a way of 'being of God'. 'Being of God' is what makes man human.

The two 'aspects' − being oneself and being of God − are not partial but total aspects of one and the same reality: the one adds nothing new to what the other already is. Hence we cannot speak of two 'components' or 'natures': a human person and a being of God. Yet there is undeniably a tension, an 'aspective' dialectics. We can consider creaturely beings − including man − in themselves, that is, in their profane reality as it were, without regard to their constitutive 'being of God'; but for religious language (which professes their constitutive dependence on God) they are in their very distinctiveness and

independence (approachable in its own right) of and by God. Human uniqueness and creatureliness are not two partial aspects or components that together might form a whole, neither can they be lumped together. For religious language, therefore, the creature is actually more of God than of himself, because his selfhood derives from God's transcendence. In other words, man the creature is not identical with his innermost reality; he harbours a 'credit factor', an inner reality (which is his self) that points to the transcendently creating, immanently indwelling God. That is why the reality in which we live and which we ourselves are is an infinite mystery: the mystery of God overflowing into his creatures. In their own way, therefore, profane and
[630] scientific language are speaking about a reality which they, too, cannot fathom. However insignificant their object of study, they are drawing upon what is infinite.

So we have to speak about these two total 'aspects' of the single reality in which we are situated in two different languages; for the access route – albeit only via human perception – forks at the point where some people experience a perceptual 'disclosure' in the character of man and world: a breach and a depth dimension in which we discern traces of their 'being of God'. This creatureliness or 'being of God' is rendered expressible in religious language; the 'being themselves' of things, on the other hand, is discussed from many different perspectives: in the discourse of psychology and sociology, the physical sciences, history, and so forth. This also means that the innermost mystery of things, especially of man, cannot be articulated in exact scientific terms; it eludes them, while at the same time it makes this scientific discourse possible. The ultimate problem of human salvation is at a level beyond science − however much science and technology can help to liberate man from his self-alienation as a result of physical, mental and social conditioning.

So for believers who confess the creative, living God every creature is a constitutive reference to God according to its own measure and definition. For human beings this means that their existential measure makes them open to the conscious, reciprocal presence of God and man – albeit in a very distinctive nature. For this 'being of God' that is a concomitant of humanness, being its very ground and source, is also the root and matrix of all religiosity, at least as a constitutive demand for what could provide a foundation and meaning for our problematic 'being there' (*Dasein*); it also provides a basis for the core of the reality and experiential quality of what presents itself in history as 'religions'.

Independently of this inner reference to God in the core of our existence, we can also reflect on the human person and reach the insight that man only becomes a person through giving himself to his fellow men in a world which he has to humanize. The *insight* per se does not require religiosity. 'Being man'

for others may therefore be discovered as a good description by historical people other than believers as well. The other needs me in order to be himself [631] and attain personal identity. The realization that people can be a burden or a blessing to one another is a verifiable cultural reality. In religious language the believer will say the same − yet more. The moment the other person turns to me for caring commitment to him − somebody for whom I can and should work and who appeals to me for care and devotion – it expresses the sovereignly free call of the creator revealing himself in our human world. The believer will translate this, on the basis of his reality, into a summons to communion with God, experienced in the (ambivalent) forms of our historically situated human fellowship and responsible concern for what happens in history. This love and care, while historically and geographically situated, are nonetheless boundless; they have intimate, wider and ultimately distant horizons which expand ever further. Thus human concern for others, the outreach of human love, via my limited yet boundlessly widening situation (especially in modern circumstances) becomes virtually limitless and universal. It gives the believer a glimpse of the universal, creative love of the one God who, in and through human beings, seeks to bring liberation and salvation for all mankind.

Yet we must remember that the creature, in effect man, not only reveals but also obscures God. That is to say: God's transcendence in immanence, and with respect to man (as a personal being) through overwhelming immanence, is referential. Don't misunderstand me: I am not saying that God's transcendence is the *antithesis* of his immanence in the world (history and human beings) − that is inconceivable; but we can say that God's immanence affords only a non-divine, creaturely angle, a profile, of his transcendence, which after all is not constituted by his immanence in creatures. To my mind the latter is the definition of pantheism or panentheism. True, it is not easy to define pantheism as opposed not only to the Christian concept of creation but to all sorts of monistic, a-cosmic and pan-cosmic religiosity as well. Furthermore, as L. Lavelle points out, even (Christian) theism always runs a risk of pantheism.[2] Pantheism is not defined by its emphasis on the unity of God and his creatures; expressions such as *sumus aliquid Dei* or *sumus Dei* − we are 'of God' − can have both a Christian and a pantheistic meaning; besides, many forms of authentic [632] pantheism accept both God's creative activity and the creature as distinct from that activity. What is specific to pantheism is its denial of the gratuity, the radical grace of creaturely existence, which (tacitly or explicitly) states that God intrinsically *needs* creation to perfect the definition of his divinity. Such a pantheistic God concept precludes the possibility of God's sovereignly free

[2] L. Lavelle, 'La voie étroite' in TPh 13 (1951) (42-61), 54.

self-surrender to his creatures, to man, in that the need for self-completion precludes his free, overwhelming self-communication. That robs the concept of God's self-giving of all meaning and content. It also robs history of the meaning it may have for God's freedom.

If God does not derive his uniqueness or divinity (for us, his transcendence) from his overwhelming immanence in creatures − which does not restrict or truncate God's transcendence but reveals his presence only in confined, creaturely, non-divine measure – it implies that humanity, in disclosing that it is 'of God', actually obscures his divinity. Thus it acquires a referential character, indicating what God's transcendence (God himself) intrinsically is, since it is not constituted by his immanent presence in our history; after all, that immanence is a free gift. To put it graphically: the creature − world, history, man − is the presence of and the space in which God *gratuitously* is; God himself is the presence of and the space in which, by his very *nature,* he is God in and through his absolutely free divinity. To deny this, in my view, would restrict God's transcendence. For that reason our human world permits only indirect, 'mediated' immediacy[3] between God and man. This does not entail a dualistic concept of transcendence, comprising both God's intrinsic uniqueness and his transcendence-through-interiority; instead it means that we have only a limited perspective on the transcendent God via his immanent traces in this world, in history and in man, in our fellow men. Indeed we only see his back, as the Old Testament puts it, not because he has already gone by but because he is always ahead of historical human beings: he is God ahead of us. For historical human beings who are still making history God's transcendence through interiority essentially refers to the future: he precedes us into a future, *his* future in us. Security in God, then, is assurance of a future, hope and trust rather than acquiescence in the present.

[633] However much creatures, and they alone, impart God's presence to us, they are not God, not even in their cosmic or historical totality. So all we have is a perspective on God from non-divinity, that which makes God *not*-God: the creaturely world. One has to bear this insight in mind when inquiring into the uniqueness of God's revelation in Jesus.

It follows that the distinctively human and universal uniqueness of Jesus of Nazareth – which the Christian churches confess – should become apparent in the uniqueness of his relations with his fellow man, an existential praxis based on a unique relationship with the living God − and that within the restricted, contingent, ambivalent limits of restricted, earthly history. A priori there can be no question of a 'super-historical' absolute ideal. Jesus is *the* 'significantly other' one among us.

[3] E. Schillebeeckx, 'Stilte gevuld met parabels', in *Politiek of mystiek?* (Bruges-Utrecht 1973), 69-81.

Substantiated, albeit evocative and analogous, talk about God's activity in our world is based on his immanently transcendent activity in creation: our world and its history. However, there could be valid grounds for differentiations in the way we speak about God's acts in the world, and based on these we might use different terminology to express his living reality (without extending these differentiations to God himself). After all, the ultimate ground and source of this world, even in its differentiations, are still the living reality of God.

Despite all continuity, for instance, there is an undeniable difference between men and animals. Man displays a startling novelty, something specifically human − a certain discontinuity with the rest of creation. Hence those who believe in the creator God and speak of him in religious language can justifiably speak, albeit in evocative, analogous language, of God's 'special acts' for mankind, and therefore of a special, overflowing immanence of the transcendent God − an immanence which (considering human consciousness) really can become 'presence': conciliation, a demand for encounter, calling, disclosing one's presence, 'revelation'. Thus by virtue of the distinction [634] between intrinsically natural processes and human history (despite their interwovenness) believers have solid grounds to speak of God's *special* acts in human history.

In human history man's concern is with his salvation and happiness, with the desired *humanum.* On that premise believers are entitled to describe God's acts in history as salvific. These acts, too, are transcendent and not interventions in the 'normal' course of history. Like any divine act it is 'creative', sovereignly free, transcendent and thus nonetheless immanent in our history; it *is* this so-called 'profane history' but in its 'total' aspect of 'being of God'. Hence its empirical, recognizable expressions in history can only be articulated in religious language in a disclosure experience. Speaking about God's saving acts in history requires discernible 'traces' of God's saving passage through our history. Just as the discontinuity we experience between man and animals causes us to speak differently in religious language about God's dealings with man and with animals, so – irrespective of continuity − human experience of discontinuity can be the sole grounds for speaking of God's *special* saving acts in history. Believers are entitled to call (in religious language) such universal activity by the creator God that is coextensive with the whole of human history 'special saving acts' only if discontinuous – albeit humanly engendered − phenomena indeed occur somewhere in that history. Again there is no question of non-transcendent, hence intervening, saving acts of God. All this implies that God manifests and reveals himself to human beings as active in salvation history only via 'indirect' revelation. Through the

liberating conduct of men in quest of salvation from God, he reveals himself 'indirectly' in history as salvation for men. His saving initiative is particularly evident in startling, 'discontinuous' historical events, experiences and interpretations. If God's salvific acts are real and divine, our history will contain 'signs' of his liberating activity with man − signs which must be noted, seen and interpreted, because in themselves, like every historical phenomenon, they are ambiguous, ambivalent, requiring interpretation. Only when
[635] interpreted, experienced and articulated by human beings, are they acknowledged as signs of God's saving acts in history, which is nevertheless made by men.

C. GOD'S DEFINITIVE SAVING ACTS IN HISTORY

Should there be definitive and decisive saving acts of God in our history, they would take the form of empirical, historical events, interpreted and expressed in religious language. When Jesus of Nazareth is confessed as God's eschatological, definitive, saving act, his earthly, historical manifestation must be susceptible to religious experience and expressible in religious language. Then Jesus will appear as an overwhelming divine immanence, a striking 'discontinuity' within the continuity of human history, which can be experienced and expressed in religious language as a historical sign in which God's definitive saving act for the salvation of all men is concentrated: a decisive sign of definitive salvation must have appeared in our history. Then we indeed have a human story which tells God's own story.

This means that Jesus's human life expressed the ultimate meaning of human existence in word and deed, as a norm and a model. Again God's manifestation is only 'revealed' in the interpretive act of faith − the act of those who understand and accept Jesus as definitive for their self-understanding and worldview. Revelation then issues in the believer's response: yes indeed, this is how a truly human life has to be lived. God's eschatological presence in Jesus and man's ultimate understanding of reality are correlative.

This means that we have to speak about Jesus Christ both historically and in religious language even though both languages deal with the same reality, but without incorporating the two into a third, unitive language (supposedly encompassing both) to comprehend the two total aspects of Jesus's life: he is fully human and, in his humanity, he is the decisive historical manifestation of God's definitive saving act – even though that definitive saving act in its transcendence can only be experienced religiously in the historical man Jesus.
[636] Each language retains its own logic (as Chalcedon rightly said, 'without confusion'), but both speak about the one Jesus of Nazareth. Speaking of one and the same person, the man Jesus of Nazareth, they tell us that he is truly

historical and yet, *as such*, he is also God's definitive saving act. How these two total 'aspects' should be viewed ultimately is the *christological problem*.

Chapter 2

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL PROBLEM

§1 Definitive salvation-in-Jesus imparted by God

A. *GOD'S* MESSAGE IN JESUS

Historically it is impossible to determine whether a human being bound by time and history has universal meaning for all mankind. But if what is said about Jesus' unique universality is not to be ideological, there have to be signs and traces, requiring identification and interpretation by others, within our human hermeneutic horizon. Historically Jesus of Nazareth must have appeared at least as a catalytic question, an *invitation* with respect to man's final salvation. Christians interpreted that question and invitation in a very specific way: they found the definitive promise of salvation and liberation imparted by God in Jesus and that gave them sufficient reason to commend him to others and to witness to Jesus Christ. This has continued right up to the present day; we, too, are still confronted with the possibility of the catalytic question and invitation which Jesus is; but ... in an entirely new situation: for us Jesus raises the issue of God in an age which in most if not all sectors of life appears to do without God. It cannot involve a claim, substantiated or otherwise, that Jesus is the historical embodiment of an existential or socio-critical message. For such a message we in the 20th century are less and less inclined to turn to someone who lived in the first century of our era – and why [637] should we? The historical Jesus was a person who continues to confront us with the question whether the reality of God is not the most important thing in human life, a question which, if answered positively, demands radical *metanoia:* a reorientation of our own lives. That is why the question which Jesus continues to put to us is, in the first place, fundamentally disorienting.

Especially in a modern situation we do well to distinguish between Jesus of Nazareth as a catalytic question and invitation, and the Christian churches' christological answer to this question. It seems to me that this is also a consequence of the new pastoral situation in which we are living: namely that (besides acknowledging and celebrating the salvation imparted by God in

Jesus) our proclamation (including our Christology) should present Jesus pre-eminently as a question which catalyses our greatest human, personal and social problem. The earthly Jesus was someone who in a very specific, historical situation presented the option to take a stand for or against him. Jesus himself never directly answered the question of who he is. His personal identity is somehow woven into his message, way of life and death. Hence the question raised by his message, ministry and death can only be fully answered by responding to his person. After all, like every historical event the earthly Jesus shared the ambiguity of history, requiring interpretation and identification.

Jesus confronts us with an assured promise of a 'future from God', based on his personal *Abba* experience, and in his ministry he actually proffers it. Without the reality of this original *Abba* experience his message is an illusion, an empty myth. To put one's trust in Jesus is to ground oneself in the ground of his experience: the Father. It implies acknowledging the authentic, non-illusory reality of Jesus' *Abba* experience. This is only possible in an act of faith which, although not dependent on rationality, advances sufficient rational motives to consider the faith justified. The historical Jesus allows the Christian response as an interpretation which, because of the ambiguity of all historical phenomena, is never cogent but still rationally and morally justified, recognizable in the historical phenomenon, and as such surpassing rational motives without excluding them.

[638] In our modern situation the startling implication of Jesus' praxis, his message and its historical failure in his death is that we have to rethink the contemporary notion of total emancipation through self-liberation. For us his death by execution, which did not shake his confidence in the human focus of God's coming reign − he continued, in the face of immanent death, to proffer salvation from God – is the challenging message that historical failures do not have the last word, that even in utter fiascos we may continue trusting in God. Jesus' message is essentially intended to be a message about God and from God, a message which he maintained to the end, throughout the successes and failures of his life up to the historical fiasco on the cross, a seal on the authenticity of his life and message. This life summons us to *metanoia,* to this effect: whatever happens, put your trust in God; then – how? *I* don't know, just look at the cross! – mankind's liberation, eschatologically fulfilled salvation will come. This is Jesus' challenging message, which on the one hand permits and stimulates human liberation and emancipation, and on the other hand surpasses it in unshakable confidence in total salvation that only God can give; and that is his transcendent answer to human finitude, the necessary index and exponent of every emancipation and critical praxis. Because of his finitude (the metaphysical fissure in human nature) man is a being whose salvation,

wholeness and fulfilment depend on the grace and mercy of his creator. Man's realization that God accepts him in Jesus Christ proleptically heralds the victory of grace, even in the historical, no longer comprehensible defeat of man's finite autonomy.

Even when dying Jesus did not desperately hang on to his own identity and self-preservation, but remained intent on God's reign which, although receding as his eyes grew dim, was sure to come. Thus Jesus' message, sealed by his death, calls us to revise our self-understanding by referring to God, who silently reveals himself in Jesus' historically defenceless failure on the cross. God directs himself to mankind, but in a world which does not always share his concern; as a result his love for man in Jesus is coloured by our way of thinking. In his love for man, however, God overrides all our contortions and distortions without violating our finite autonomy. Significantly, it was a Jewish thinker and philosopher, E. Lévinas,[1] who spoke of the irresistible power of the 'defenceless other' who goes on trusting. But that shows that ethics and [639] religion, although interrelated, cannot simply be equated.

One might ask, why not look for the same sort of inspiration in other figures in world history? The question could be debated endlessly, but it overlooks an accomplished fact: Jesus' concrete appearance in history cannot be disregarded, so it continues to address an ineluctable historical challenge. The response to this challenge, identified as Christian, has adequate grounds to continue propounding trust in Jesus and witnessing to it, not just verbally but primarily through concretely enacted testimony, in which the praxis of God's kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus seeks to embody itself. In a modern situation a message without real-life praxis simply does not work. It becomes ideological propaganda, not a challenge or an inviting witness. That is why even a 'new' theological Christology will be ineffectual if it is not a theological reflection of the praxis of God's kingdom, of Christian ortho-praxis, actually demonstrated in the life of the churches in prayer and care for our fellow men. Only then does deeper reflection on Jesus' identity become fruitful.

One might say (and it is indeed both an obscure and an avowed feeling among a great many people): is human life not a matter of living by illusions and . . . dying in illusions? My response is: to be sure, that is one possibility. Only I do not see it as the Christian alternative; I believe that in the face of the historical fiasco of Jesus of Nazareth not history, but the benevolent opponent of evil − God − has the last word. This is what the early Christians tried to express with their credal affirmation of Jesus' resurrection. The phrasing may – justifiably − be criticized. But as a Christian believer I will not give up on *this:* for anyone who believes in a God of creation and covenant the historical

[1] E. Lévinas, *Totalité et infini* (The Hague 1961); see also *Het menselijk gelaat* (Utrecht 1969).

failure of Jesus of Nazareth cannot possibly be the final word. Does that not make the New Testament Christian response profoundly human and meaningful (even rationally, if not rationalistically, cogent): 'that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope' (1 Thess. 4:13)? Human history − with its successes, fiascos, illusions and disillusions − is transcended by the living God. That is the core of the Christian message.

[640] B. SALVATION IN JESUS OR IN THE RISEN CRUCIFIED ONE?

Man's historical life is terminated by death, and thus becomes an observable, specific, completed totality; but death does not constitute this whole. So even though a final judgment on somebody's life can only be passed after death, we cannot assign death exclusive, all-determining significance. While Jesus lived in our contingent, unfinished human history, for those who had a foretaste of God's saving revelation that revelation was incomplete and still in the making. Christology, then, is fundamentally a religious pronouncement on the totality of Jesus' life. The Christian disclosure experience presupposes the whole of Jesus' life. *Our* story of Jesus begins only with his death, the conclusion of his earthly life − even though our story or acknowledgment of Christ also entails recognition of Jesus of Nazareth, not of a myth or gnosis.

Jesus' message, his praxis, ultimately his very person were in fact rejected. Purely historically his life's project was a failure. Hence his message and conduct, however essential, cannot be the final word, at any rate if they are to be a ground of real hope. The gospel's response to this problem is the belief in Jesus' resurrection.

Particularly in the 'missionary' sermons in Acts (see Part Three) one finds a connection between Jesus and the Spirit (Acts 10:34-43; 2:22-36; 4:26-27; 3:12-26; 13:16-41). In those sermons Luke elucidates for his Greek readers the meaning of 'Christ' the anointed, that is, the one filled with God's Spirit: 'God was with him' (Acts 2:22; 3:14; 10:38); Christ himself is 'of God' (1 Cor. 3:23). Jesus belongs to God: '*your* holy one', '*your* servant', '*his* messiah', '*my* son' (Acts 2:27; 3:14; 4:27; 13:35; 3:13; 3:26; 4:30; 3:18; 13:33). His rejection by people is offset by his belonging to God. Believing in the earthly Jesus means (in these missionary sermons) recognizing him as God's eschatological prophet of and for Israel, the final messenger 'from God', filled with God's Spirit, proclaiming God's imminent reign and communicating it in word and deed. Believing in the *risen* Jesus is to acknowledge his universal significance for the salvation of all people. These two phases are encompassed, on the one hand by Jesus'
[641] belonging to God in a unique sense, on the other by God's fidelity to Jesus. Thus the resurrection, as God's action in and towards to Jesus, not only validates Jesus' message and praxis, but also reveals his person to be

inseparably linked with God and with his message. In Jesus' death and resurrection men's total rejection of God's offer of salvation and the ongoing offer extended in the risen Jesus converge. The risen crucified one is God's victory over man's rejection of God's offer of definitive salvation in Jesus. Through the resurrection God actually nullifies that rejection. Thus in Jesus Christ God gives definitive salvation, a future for those who neither have nor really deserve one. He loved us even 'while we were yet sinners' (Rom. 5:8). In the risen Jesus God shows himself to be the power of anti-evil, of unconditional goodness that in sovereign fashion refuses to acknowledge and actually vanquishes the supremacy of evil. In his greatest need, in suffering and crucifixion, true to his prophetic mission and message, Jesus discloses his secret, the mystery of his person: his inviolable bond with God, while the Father discloses his secret concerning Jesus: his undying commitment to Jesus. Jesus' life, his cross and resurrection in the power of the Spirit thus reveal the depth of the Father-Son relationship, and in fact raise the problem of the trinitarian God.

By sending Jesus to Israel God fulfilled the promise of the old covenant, thus saying 'yes' to creation and covenant. Only when Israel rejected the definitive offer of salvation in Jesus did God bring about a 'new creation' in and through the resurrection. So Jesus of Nazareth is at once the completion of the Old Testament and, as the rejected yet risen one, the start of the New Testament. Despite the continuity between our human history and the new creation based on Jesus' resurrection, the rejection of Jesus as the fulfilment of creation and covenant creates a discontinuity that no human act can bridge. This is intrinsically conjoined with continuity through God's startling new saving act which surmounts the fiasco of the rejected and crucified fulfiller of creation and covenant, and installs the rejected one in his role as universal saviour. Jesus' integration of his own rejection and death with his real offer of salvation (the meaning of his whole life) in our history is the intra-historical index of this victory: 'It was God who reconciled us to himself in Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. 5:19).

Because God confirmed Jesus' belonging to him whom he called *Abba* in the [642]
resurrection, the resurrection is God's endorsement of Jesus' message and praxis. It means, too, that the 'content' of the eschatological liberation expressed by the religious term 'resurrection from the dead' has to be filled in from Jesus' historical ministry − from his words and deeds which are 'endorsed' by it. Hence the dilemma of salvation in Jesus of Nazareth or salvation in the risen crucified one is a false dilemma, since the second expression affirms God's validation of Jesus of Nazareth, while the first gives substance to what God is validating. Put differently, the risen crucified one without the concrete Jesus of Nazareth is a myth or a gnostic mystery, while without what Christians call the resurrection the historical Jesus, despite his

astonishing message and conduct, would have been just one more failure in the long line of innocently convicted martyrs in the history of human suffering − a fleeting hope which each time seems to confirm a surmise that a lot of people do not *accept* human suffering, yet at the same time experience hope's utopian character in light of the distinctive nature and pressure of our own history.

Thus there is no discontinuity between Jesus of Nazareth and the risen crucified one. Because of the life which preceded it, Jesus' death does confront us with a fundamental question about God, with only two possible answers: either that God − that is, the God whose reign Jesus proclaimed − was an illusion on Jesus' part (and for his followers a disillusion); or that his rejection and death obliges us radically to revise our understanding of God, our God concepts and our understanding of history, and abandon them as invalid, since God's true nature was validly manifested only in the life and death of this Jesus which opened up a new perspective on the future. God, whose utter reliability Jesus attested, is either a tragic farce or we are invited to confess this God of Jesus, both in his preaching and in his historical failure. Faith in Jesus can only take the form of this confession of God.

The discontinuity in the Christian faith, then, is not Jesus' death – after all, he experienced it as related to his mission to proffer salvation, and as a historical consequence of his caring, loving service of people (this is the minimum, but also the most assured element that we have to retain as the historically solid core of the Last Supper tradition). The discontinuity lies in the rejection of his message and praxis, culminating in the rejection of his person.
[643] That is why God's validation in the resurrection pertains to the very person of Jesus inherent in his message and conduct. Both the rejection of and God's 'amen' to the person of Jesus validate the specificity of the Jesus event, in which both person and project – that is, person, message and praxis − are indissolubly conjoined. For the Christian creed, therefore, God's reign assumed the aspect of Jesus Christ; and it was possible to speak of the 'Lord Jesus Christ' as synonymous with the reign of God proclaimed by Jesus.

When we talk about God's 'amen' to Jesus' person, message and praxis we must remember that this, too, is a profession of faith − not a ratification or legitimation in the ordinary human sense. The resurrection confirms that God was constantly with Jesus throughout his life − right up to the human forsakenness of his death on the cross, the moment also of God's silence. One religious conviction − the resurrection − cannot serve to legitimate another religious conviction, namely, that of God's saving act in Jesus of Nazareth. Hence the real legitimation, evident to all, remains totally eschatological (that is the meaning of the parousia). Thus our faith in the resurrection is itself still a prophecy and a promise to this world – and as such unsheltered and

unprotected, defenceless and vulnerable! So a Christian life is not visibly 'justified' by historical facts. But those who believe in Jesus' resurrection are freed by this belief from any compulsion to justify themselves and from any requirement that God should publicly take man and his world under his protection here and now, and should ratify them. The servant is not greater than his master. Like Jesus, the Christian risks entrusting himself and the vindication of his life to God; he is prepared to receive that vindication as Jesus did: beyond death. And so, reconciled to God's way of doing things, he is also reconciled with himself, with others, with history, in which he tries nevertheless to realize emancipation and justice. This is why Christians can exert themselves to the full, without violence or rancour, in order to improve this world, to make it a happier and more just world without alienation. Yet no more than Jesus can Christians present any legitimating credentials except by actually putting into practice God's kingdom in this human history of ours.

C. INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' RESURRECTION FOR SALVATION [644]

In many theological traditions the resurrection often functions as God's great miracle accomplished in Jesus, yet wholly unrelated to ourselves. It is presented as an empirical, objective fact, as though the empty tomb and the appearances should prove to believers and nonbelievers alike, even if not with mathematical certainty, that Jesus rose. Modern Protestant and, less overtly, some Catholic publications, on the other hand, undeniably tend to *identify* Jesus' resurrection with the disciples' new life and Christian paschal faith after the death of their master. The disciples then hand down 'the cause (*Sache*) of Jesus', basing themselves on this paschal renewal of their lives. However, these writers (especially R. Bultmann and W. Marxsen) leave us guessing as to whether he personally rose and whether he himself, now living beyond death and present among us in a new way, brought about the renewal of the apostles' lives – by his own power.

Before we start criticizing this school of thought for its, to my mind, unjustified silence on certain scores, we ought to ask whether what it does say does not capture an aspect of truth (traditionally passed over in silence). These theologians have, I think, caught sight of an aspect often neglected in traditional resurrection doctrines. Rightly, in my view, they have reacted against a sort of empiricist objectivism in which, without any act of faith – hence without any religious experience − people were supposedly able to see the resurrected Jesus. However, the critical question is whether they in their turn, while rightly stressing the apostolic religious experience, have not ignored what happened to Jesus, and therefore what gave rise to the disciples'

paschal experience: the risen Jesus himself (even if socio-cultural, socio-psychological interpretations are also relevant from *their* perspective, rationally the Christian interpretation demands – from its perspective – similar consideration. And why not?). At any rate, certain exegetical theologians give the impression that resurrection and belief in the resurrection are one and the same; in other words, that the resurrection did not happen in the person of Jesus but only, as it were, in the minds of the believing disciples. That makes
[645] resurrection a symbolic expression of the disciples' renewal of life, albeit triggered by the inspiration they drew from the earthly Jesus. It is not clear whether that is exactly what these authors mean. But (probably against their deepest intentions) a popularized version has emerged, in which that is unmistakably intended, defended and sometimes even propagated from the pulpit (see above, pp. 585ff). This interpretation strikes me as foreign to both to the New Testament and the major Christian traditions. I dissociate myself from it completely.

Our earlier analysis of what actually underlies the accounts of the appearances showed that the resurrection kerygma preceded the amplified accounts of 'appearances of Jesus', but on the other hand the New Testament suggests an undeniably intrinsic connection between Jesus' resurrection and the Christian Easter or religious experiences, expressed in terms of the model of 'appearances'. I described the Easter experience as a 'conversion process', not simply in the sense of Jesus' disciples being 'sorry' that in one way or another they had let him down (this aspect of their conversion had evidently begun before Jesus' death, at least if we assign Mk. 14:72c and Lk. 22:62 historical value), but in the sense of a major turn-about and transformation (including that aspect) as a result of which, after Jesus' death, his disciples acknowledged and confessed him as the Christ − that is, a conversion process in which they became Christians in the strict sense of the word.

From the analysis of the Easter experience it is clear that the objective and subjective aspects of the apostolic belief in the resurrection cannot be separated. Without a religious experience it is not possible to speak meaningfully about Jesus' resurection. It would be like talking about colours when everybody has been blind from birth. While not identical with it, Jesus' resurrection − that is, what happened to him personally after his death − is inseparable from the disciples' Easter experience or religious experience: that is to say, from their conversion process, in which they perceived the work of Christ's Spirit (see above, e.g. p. 383ff). Without this Christian faith experience the disciples had no way of gaining insight into Jesus' resurrection. But besides the subjective aspect it is equally clear (according to Christian religious belief) that no Easter experience of renewed life was possible without the personal resurrection of Jesus − in the sense that Jesus' personal/bodily resurrection (in

terms of logical and ontological priority; here chronological priority is meaningless) 'preceded' any religious experience. That Jesus himself rose in his own person, then, means not only that he was raised from the dead by the [646] Father (after all, what does this 'in itself' signify for us?), but also − and just as essentially − that in the dimension of our history God gave him a community (later called the church); at the same time it means that the Jesus exalted to be with the Father is *with us* in an altogether new way. It was this indissoluble link between Jesus' personal resurrection and the Christian religious experience of Jesus' Easter presence in their midst that made the disciples see the intrinsically saving significance of Jesus' resurrection – in fact, the significance of his resurrection precisely for us! My deliberately detailed analyses of what the New Testament actually means by 'appearances of Jesus' show that in and through the experience of Jesus' renewed presence and the renewed offer of salvation (after his death) the disciples arrived at the religious conviction that Jesus had risen. Hence Jesus' resurrection is essentially also the sending of the Spirit, and is thus intrinsically connected with the Christian religious or Easter experience − the work of Christ's Spirit, not through any hocus-pocus but in human, profane historical ways and, from a particular perspective, accessible to human analysis.

The foregoing discussion shows that Jesus' resurrection is both the sending of the Spirit and the founding of the church: the fellowship of the risen one with his people on earth. That is why I insisted so strongly that belief in the resurrection is not a 'mere' Christian interpretation of the earthly Jesus, but that this christological interpretation has to imply new religious experiences after Jesus' death. The Easter experience lies in the experience of an event: the reassembling of the disciples, not merely *in the name of* Jesus (although we underrate the full impact of the phrase in Judaism) but in the power of the risen Christ himself: 'Where two or three are gathered together in his name, Jesus is *in the midst of them*'; in my opinion this New Testament text is perhaps the purest, most adequate rendering of the Easter experience. Jesus' resurrection and the reassembly of his disciples − in fact: becoming a church (apart from their separation from God's people, the Jews), on the basis of the apostles' religious experience after Jesus' death − are two real facets of the same great saving event: from his seat at the Father's side, Jesus is present in a new way with his disciples on earth. Hence one cannot speak of Jesus' personal resurrection without referring at the same time to his saving presence in our midst as *experienced* here and now and *articulated* in belief in the [647] resurrection: Easter experience, renewal of life and reassembling or 'being a church'. Precisely in and through the religious Easter experience and the experienced renewal of life (expressed in the New Testament in terms of the model of 'appearances') we learn what happened to Jesus himself: he lives!

Here experience of *reality* and the reality of *experience*, I have said, are inseparable. This affirmation has nothing to do with the idea that Jesus rose only 'in the kerygma' or 'in our faith experience', while actually he still lingered in the realm of the dead. I reject that interpretation.

Consequently we have to get beyond both empiricism and fideism. In doing so I do not 'interiorize' more than the New Testament does in its report of the appearances, which − however we explain them − at any rate point to the subjective, interiorizing, experiential aspect as a correlate of Jesus' personal resurrection. Considering the special, 'once only' character of the very first paschal faith experience – which determines our faith as well – of the apostles, who after all had known Jesus prior to his death (a circumstance that gave them a unique privilege, rightly called 'election' in religious language), I would like to 'generalize' the structure of what is meant by appearances of Jesus (i.e. the intrinsic relation between the risen Jesus and the religious experience of God's community, the church): the origin of Christianity also points to its abiding essence. Despite the unrepeatable uniqueness of the first apostles, who had known Jesus before his death, the way the apostles became Christians does not differ all that much from our way today. So for all Christians the affirmation that God raised Jesus from the dead accurately describes an immediate reality and is not a secondary interpretation or ideological construction, separable from the experiential situation. I repeat: the paschal religious experience expresses what happened to Jesus himself for the salvation of all. That applied to the apostles; but it applies − if our faith is to be more than a mere convention − just as much to present-day Christians (thanks to the intermediary function of the living community, the church). All this is clear from our analysis of the concept of revelation. Revelation is God's saving activity in history, as experienced and expressed in religious language by human believers, on the basis of the earliest, primal stories, which, for
[648] Christians, begin with the historical reality of Jesus of Nazareth (though not without including such generally human, religious stories).

Taking a systematic look at the exegetical analyses, yet another problem arises. It is sometimes said that resurrection is just the reverse side of death, that is, the saving aspect of Jesus' death. I reject that as well. I stressed (see above) the negativity of death, including Jesus' death, simply as the death of a human being. But it is clear that for Jesus the negativity of death was inwardly intensified by his Abba experience, and therefore his love for humanity, his prophetic loving service until death. From beyond the inherently negative nature of death, as it were, Jesus' death was given positive 'content', carried as he was by his positive service to the cause of man as the cause of God. Jesus could meaningfully endure what was meaningless – death − and even incorporate it into his offer of salvation. But that does not nullify or undo that

meaningless death! Hence his resurrection must be more than simply publicizing what took place in his death, as some maintain. Jesus' resurrection (by God), precisely as a corrective victory over the negativity of death, including his own, is indeed a new event, different from his suffering and death, even in their salvific dimensions. Thus his resurrection is also essentially an exaltation, a completely new mode of existence, and not just the eternal perpetuation of his person, message and praxis. In the end people obtain ultimate identity only from God, albeit on the basis of fellowship with God in this earthly life, but also beyond death and through God's victory over death and all that is negative in the history of human suffering.

That is why the Christian believer has good reason to maintain – in terms of his *resurrection view* of Jesus' death and nothing else! − that Jesus' death means that death itself loses its power to separate us from God. For in every religious understanding of life, especially a *Jewish* one (the experiential horizon of the Christian interpretation of Jesus), death (in and of itself) is not only a separation from the earthly context, a parting from one's nearest and dearest, but the end of everything and thus (for believers) at its core separation from God: the end of a living relationship with God and, in and because of that, the end of all human and creaturely fellowship. But Jesus' resurrection, by way of an exalted, new form of life, shows that at least his death could not separate him from his living fellowship with God, his *Abba.* In Christ, then, death acquires an entirely new significance: God refuses to part from Jesus in death, [649] and conquers it. That opens up a new dimension beyond death for us as well: a living relationship with God is unaffected by suffering and death for anyone who, like Jesus, keeps trusting in God.

Before we proceed to look for the deepest foundations of these astounding Jesus events, which seem to offer a meaningful answer to the harrowing question of the history of human suffering in quest of meaning and liberation, we sum up the New Testament data concerning the resurrection and appearances of Jesus from a systematic theological standpoint. Jesus' resurrection, acknowledged and confessed in and through the apostles' conversion or Easter experience, is (a) God's legitimation, ratification and approval of Jesus' person, message and life of service 'unto death'; (b) it is also exaltation and new creation, that is to say, God's corrective victory over the negativity of death and man's history of suffering, which Jesus shared; in other words, there is life after death; (c) the resurrection is at the same time the sending of the Spirit and as such the founding of the church, a renewed living fellowship, of the personal, living Jesus Christ with his people on earth. But Christians can speak about these three most essential aspects of Jesus' resurrection only on the basis of religious experiences − church (i.e. also collective) experiences − and never without these.

That brings us to the following conclusion. The core of the New Testament, as regards Jesus' resurrection and appearances, amounts to this: the church's Christian conviction (after all, it is human beings, Christians, who assert that Jesus is risen, and the assertion of human beings that this is God's revelation does not alter the fact that it is an assertion by people, who claim that all this is undergirded by God's grace; one may not minimise the problems this poses) that Jesus is risen (the content of Christian proclamation) is a religious assurance that comes from God alone. The way in which the divine source of that religious assurance took on historical form (for there can be no question of any supernatural hocus-pocus) can be debated endlessly on exegetical grounds. But anyone who accepts the gracious, divine origin of this apostolic conviction (and we have repeatedly stressed the New Testament affirmation of that divine origin in our analysis of the Jesus appearances) stands on Christian ground. He cannot be declared a heretic, hence can only be judged and, if necessary, criticized on the basis of historico-critical and anthropological
[650] arguments, but then as a brother in the same Christian faith.

§2 The necessity, difficulty and limits of a theoretical christological identification of the person

The response in which Christians acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the decisive, definitive salvation imparted by God and thus recognize and confess the 'story of God' in Jesus' human story, cannot be reduced exegetically to a sort of conclusion drawn from in-depth analysis of New Testament texts (however necessary that may be to get to the true story of Jesus). For, more than anywhere else, the mediated nearness of God's compassion is condensed in Jesus, both in a veiled and a revelatory capacity. Nowhere was the intermediary veiled so effectively: it was even possible to send Jesus to his death in the name of orthodox religiosity. Yet nowhere is God's direct and gratuitous nearness in him so palpably present for anyone who goes to encounter him openly and submits to his *metanoia*: church traditions dare call him 'true God'. A person cannot be approached as a person by way of scientific and theoretical analysis. Yet anybody willing to put himself at stake can − even today − listen to the Jesus story in such a way as to recognize in it the parable of God himself and thus the paradigm of the humanness of our humanity: a new, unprecedented existential option, thanks to the God whose concern is with man. Part of the plot of the Jesus story is that his amazing freedom should scandalize those who take offence at him (Lk. 7:23) and at the same time become salvation (as liberating freedom) for those who venture to entrust themselves to the fascinating mystery of Jesus' life-story.

That raises the question whether excessive theoretical precision with respect

to Jesus Christ's identity does not do more harm than good. Theoretical precision about the divine event, which overpowered Jesus and constitutes the meaning and heart of his life, impoverishes that event and thus teeters on the edge of the abyss of heretical, one-sided distortion. This applies all the more in Jesus' case, because it also involves a violent death. And whilst we have to [651] point out (on the basis, be it said, of critical, scientific exegesis) that with his approaching death in prospect Jesus integrated it with his surrender to God and his offer of salvation to men, the core of his whole life, on the other hand the negativity of this death, especially when viewed as rejection, cannot be reasoned away. Salvation and the history of human suffering, especially innocent, unjust suffering, allow no theoretical or rational mitigation or reconciliation. On the one hand salvation history is accomplished in Jesus' life itself; this is not wiped out or suspended by his death; on the other hand, as rejection Jesus' suffering and death can only be described historically as a calamity, absence of salvation; the negativity is undeniable. Theoretically − in the sense of rational transparency − the two are irreconcilable. This tallies with the foregoing analysis in which we maintained that there can be no theoretical basis either for rationalizing the universal hermeneutic horizon. Hence we have to concede that there is only one way out: to discuss salvation imparted by God in the 'non-identity' of Jesus' history of suffering and death.[2] This effectively removes the suffering from God's domain and leaves it in the worldly reality of the human condition and human freedom; it does suggest that in this non-divine situation of suffering and death Jesus nonetheless continues to identify with the cause of God, without contaminating God with his own suffering. In and with Jesus God clearly remains sovereignly free: 'My ways are not your ways' (Is. 55:8); that applies to every child of man. But when his death drew near Jesus identified submissively with the unfathomable, not without struggle but wholeheartedly, just as God for his part identified the kingdom of God with Jesus in the resurrection. In the non-divine reality of innocent suffering and death, which ultimately remain opaque, Jesus 'endured' his personal identification with the coming reign of God. Hence God's final, supreme revelation took place in his silent but intimate nearness to the suffering and dying Jesus, who in that way plumbed the depths of the human condition, and at the same time demonstrated his indissoluble bond with God. No theory can effectively reduce that to a rational system. One can only witness in faith. That is where *our* story begins.

This insight cautions us against any attempt to spell out the soteriological [652] significance of Jesus' death theoretically. We are confronted with salvation that eludes analysis, yet presents itself as a purpose to pursue and a principle to

[2] An apt expression by J. B. Metz, 'Erlösung und Emanzipation', in StdZ (1973) (171-184), 182.

live by. This reticence goes back to the attempt to define Jesus' personal identity precisely. Manifestly Jesus is wholly on God's side and at the same time completely on man's side: in radical solidarity with God and his sovereignly free divinity, but at the same time in total solidarity with people. In fact, this is the definition of God's humanly oriented reign, but experienced by Jesus in the radical alienation of innocent suffering and death, that is, the non-divine. This makes the cross by definition not an event between God and God,[3] but on the contrary, the index of the anti-divine forces in our human history, which have to be combated and which Jesus nonetheless inwardly overcame through his solidarity with God. His solidarity with God in an anti-godly situation brought us salvation. Jesus repudiated any competition between God's honour and sublimity and human happiness and salvation. But who can pin this down theoretically, defining both God and humanity? They fail to convince us. The same reservation governs our next attempt at a more detailed definition, conducted at the level of 'second-order' credal professions where human reflection plays a much greater role and where the result must be measured by its significance and relevance both for the salvation God offers man and for its 'doxological' significance, that is, the degree to which such reflection promotes prayerful homage to God.

§3 In search of the basis of Jesus' *Abba* experience: soul of his message, life and death, and disclosure of the mystery of his life

The detailed discussion in Part Two showed that what Jesus had to say about God's salvation for man springs directly from his personal experience of the reality of God, whom – remarkably at that time − he called '*Abba*', a term borrowed from Jewish family life. We can probe further: what undergirded Jesus' knowledge, uniquely rooted in God, expressed in an *Abba* experience that became both the source of his confident proclamation of God's coming
[653] reign and the power-house of a praxis anticipating the praxis of the kingdom of God?

We have said that the reality and experiential quality of religious experience are rooted in the creaturely condition of our finite humanity, in other words, in the given reality of distinctively human, finite autonomy, wholly sustained by God's creative activity. Ultimately this finite self is 'of God' rather than 'of oneself', and is therefore a trace of God's reality at the very heart of our existence.

That raises the following christological question: can this fundamental, creaturely status, this being 'of God' − common to all human beings yet

[3] J. Moltmann, *Der gekreuzigte Gott* (Munich 1972).

differentiated according to each person's individual situation and profile – provide an adequate basis, also in Jesus, to elucidate his highly individual *Abba* experience? Or does this original experience of God surpass the capacity of universal creatureliness? As a christological question it presupposes acknowledging definitive, God-given salvation and wellbeing in Jesus; after all, without that a christological question is pointless. Of course, religious belief in definitive God-given salvation in and through Jesus may already implicitly answer a christological question; but then we still need to distil the implicit Christology from it.

There might be some general grounds for calling this 'being in, of and through God' − definition of the creatureliness of a human person (see above) – an *enhypostasis,* the assimilation of the human person *into* the 'person' (*hypostasis*) of God.[4] We must realize, however, that in so doing we are using theological terminology in a quite unhistorical, hence confusing way. And though human language is very elastic, its historical confinement sets certain requirements. On the other hand arresting, non-historical use of a specific terminology may, through its initial shock value, draw attention to an aspect which normally escapes our attention because it is so familiar. For if God's creative presence in man − man's lingering in God, as Eastern theology likes to call it − is God himself, his 'person' (hypostasis), then a human creature's 'being of and in God' really is an *enhypostasis*: the one is the other. If God in his being is pure hypostasis (however he might be further defined), then creatureliness is by definition a hypostatic union. But this is saying no more and no less than that things and people are created by God and that man in particular can become aware of God's indwelling. Hence it is better not to use the term 'hypostatic union' in this context; it says nothing new and, in view of [654] its historical use, it can only cause confusion, as often happens when precisely defined terminology is used unhistorically.[5]

However much it may be 'of God' and, by virtue of that, of 'itself', a creature is nonetheless by definition non-God, a profane reality, whose very creatureliness impels it not to see itself as God and to regard nothing except God as God. Belief in creation is essentially a radical critique of any ideological idolatry out of jealous reverence for God's unique transcendence. This explains, in the first place, the reaction of, for example, Judaism and Islam to Christian worship of the man Jesus Christ; it arises from jealous zeal, shared by Jews, Muslims and Christians alike, for monotheistic confession of one God. At the very least this reaction should meet with Christian sympathy; for

[4] Thus P. Schoonenberg, in TvT 12 (1972), 313-314.

[5] In a historical context it is not just a matter of a *unio in hypostasi* but also − and formally − of a *unio secundum hypostasin*, that is to say, as Thomas so well expresses the tradition: *unio in persona secundum rationem personae* (*Q.D. de unione Verbi Incarnati,* art. 1. ad 8), that is, so that the divine person does in fact exercise the function of the man Jesus qua person.

Christians, too, Yahwistic monotheism, in which and by which Jesus himself lived, is the basic affirmation of their creed. Jesus' *Abba* experience should also be interpreted against the background of Jewish monotheism.

Because humanity in all its creatureliness, according to its own measure, is an 'open' mode of being not easily demarcated by specific − albeit general creaturely − boundaries (as is the case with other creatures despite occasional transgressions even here),[6] in Jesus' case we have to reckon a priori with human nature as 'situated' yet open freedom, not permitting any predetermination by nature. The potential and concrete modalities of a person's 'being of God' cannot be restricted a priori by claiming to know the limits of our humanity. Even if we were able to define, approximately, the scope and boundaries of the freedom that our human physical, psychological and social situation and condition permit, we cannot possibly predict − within those conditions − what human freedom is capable of, the more so if we know them to be grounded in God's absolute freedom. Thus no speculative anthropology can tell me what a person, building his life on the living God, can draw from that by way of indestructible assurance of ultimate possibilities 'from God' and what explosive historical forces that could unleash. No nonreligious approach can grasp or measure the historical power of religious awareness of the *Deus, intimior intimo meo* − that is, the creative God who in
[655] and via human history takes absolute initiatives in immanent, highly intimate transcendent ways. These potentialities of 'religious consciousness', which cannot be circumscribed in advance, should make us wary of seeking the ground of Jesus' original *Abba* experience too quickly in anything other than his creaturely human status.

Within this religious relationship Jesus transposes the epicentre of his life to God, the Father. But that does not mean that he finds his centre outside himself. The 'spatial' metaphor is misleading once the believer realizes that the 'outside' – the 'greater than I' (see Jn. 14:28) − is actually *intimior intimo meo,* that is, constitutes Jesus' humanity in its innermost freedom. Man, aware of his creatureliness, experiences himself as a pure gift of God. Because of the depth of Jesus' experience (of himself as a gift of God, the Father) the faith of the church – as of the Christian *oikumene* − identifying with him, proceeded to call Jesus 'the Son', thus specifying his creaturely relation to God. What in nonreligious language is called − and rightly − a human person is called Son of God in Christian religious language by virtue of this human being's constitutive relation to the Father.

From this it should be clear that, when someone grounds himself in God on a basis of acknowledged creatureliness, it can never result in any loss of

[6] Thomas actually calls this openness a *capacitas ad unionem hypostaticam* (*Summa Theologiae,* III, q. 6, a. 4, ad 3).

humanness. If according to religious language (which tries to articulate reality) 'grounding' the self in God is a source of real and startling humanity, the supreme experience of God will be a humanly unexpected revelation of man. In terms of the authentic meaning of creatureliness (despite all debasing and disturbing deformation to which, owing to the complications of human finitude, 'the highest in man' is invariably prone) man's supreme union with God (in and of itself) can never result in loss of his humanness, since his (albeit finite) autonomy and full humanity are in fact constituted by God's creative activity. Besides, however intimately this union with God manifests itself in a historical person, we can never speak of two components, humanity *and* divinity, only of two total 'aspects': real humanity in which 'being of God', in this case 'being of the Father', is realized.

Thus it would be misleading to say that Jesus, in himself a human person, is 'assimilated' into the Logos, thereby deepening and perfecting his humanity. What makes it misleading is that it mixes up two language games which enable us to speak about Jesus like about any human being. Jesus is first [656]
posited − in one language game − as a 'human person' in himself, and then – secondly, actually in religious language − we speak of his assimilation into the Logos. The statements are correct at both language levels. What is misleading is the ingenuous combination of the two; for then Jesus is 'presumed' in advance to be already constituted as a human person, and that this person (according to religious language) is subsequently assimilated into the Logos. It should be evident from the foregoing that for religious language, which nonetheless recognizes and endorses the distinctiveness of nonreligious language, this prior personhood, separate from his 'being of the Father', is not postulated anywhere. It is a legitimate result of the inevitable 'two-language' approach to one and the same reality, which, because it is both independent and of the Father, lends itself to a twofold approach. We have no unitive language capable of bridging the two total aspects and expressing them as one. But then according to the logic of religious language Jesus' human personhood cannot be a presupposition of his constitutive relation to the Father into which he is assimilated. That relation in fact postulates his personhood as the unique individual Jesus. In the human, profane language game we naturally call Jesus a human person − without that personhood nobody is a human being. In religious language we say that the man Jesus is this person *because* of his constitutive relation to the Father, just as − at each person's own level – everyone is this particular human person because of his essential relation to the creator God. For Jesus it means that his relation to the Father makes him the Son of God *in his humanity*. In the same analogous fashion we call every human being a person; but in religious language we say, without denying the previous affirmation (on the contrary, designating it as the ground of personhood), that

this personhood is entirely 'of God'. The man Jesus is this person because that is what makes him the Son of the Father, and without forfeiting any of his humanity − on the contrary, confirming, deepening and perfecting all that positive human perfection, hence *a fortiori* human personhood, entails. So any *anhypostasis,* loss of human personhood, in Jesus, must, of course, be rejected;
[657] yet this rejection still does not define the exact nature of Jesus' human personhood in his relation to the Father.

The presence model, which applies to each and every creature (especially and formally to a human person), is obviously applicable to Jesus as well; but in and of itself, in view of its generalized character and possible modalities, it does not help us to define the uniqueness of the presence of God the Father in Jesus, at any rate as long as the ground of that presence is not specified. It is not a question of a divine presence with and in a human being who is presupposed 'in advance' to have been constituted as a person by God's creative act and then, secondarily as it were, assimilated into the Logos. Hence the question is: is God's general creative, constitutive act the ground of Jesus' conscious or mystical union with the Father because he was completely filled with the Holy Spirit? Or is this creative constitutive act, precisely to the extent that *at the same time* it constitutes the man Jesus as Son of the Father, the ground of Jesus' personhood and his consequent mystical union with the Father?

Patristic and indeed the entire Christian tradition has always tried to define Jesus' actual person in terms of the nature of the salvation he brought. Because the salvation is from God, its bearer was himself called divine, hence it was concluded that Jesus was a divine person. The governing principle, that there is at any rate a significant, intrinsic and real link between Jesus' person and the salvation he brought from God, strikes me as correct; it is clearly suggested by the gospels, which see Jesus Christ as the eschatological, salvific gift of God. But if so, the *definitive eschatological character* of the salvation he brought must tell us something about the actual person of the bringer, not the Greek presuppositions of this patristic principle.

Given all this, at a specific point Christology indeed faces a choice: to follow the way of the Unitarians or the way of the Trinitarians. It may be that Unitarian Christology has not always been sufficiently understood (although to my mind it offers no solution!). For although a great deal has been written about the triune God, what is said about the Trinity is constantly vacillating between **a** 'modalism' more or less devoid of content and a 'tri-theism' that says too much, while attempts to dodge this Scylla and Charybdis lapse into more or less rarified, insubstantial, purely verbal distinctions.[7] This, however,

[7] We see Thomas wrestling with this problem: formally, according to him, the divine persons are not at all distinct *as* persons, but as *relationes,* that is, in their origin antithetical relations (*Q.D. de*

is the result of viewing the Trinity without linking it to the christological interpretation of Jesus, while the immediately post-biblical doctrine of the Trinity is clearly presented as an explication of the mystery of Christ. This last conclusion means that we should not understand Jesus taking the Trinity as our starting point, but vice versa: only when we start with Jesus is God's fullness of *unity* (not so much a *unitas trinitatis* but a *trinitas unitatis)* to some extent accessible. Only in light of Jesus' life, death and resurrection do we know that the Trinity is the divine mode of God's perfect unity of being. Only on the basis of Jesus of Nazareth, his *Abba* experience − source and soul of his message, ministry and death − and his resurrection can we say anything meaningful about Father, Son and Spirit. For what matters in Jesus' *Abba* experience is that his unique turning to the Father is 'preceded' in absolute priority and is inwardly supported by the Father's unique turning to Jesus. Early Christian tradition calls this self-communication of the Father − ground and source of Jesus' *Abba* experience − the Word. This implies that the Word of God is the sustaining ground of the entire Jesus phenomenon. [658]

In his humanity Jesus is so intimately 'of the Father' that precisely by virtue of this he is Son of God. This suggests that the centre of his humanity was not located in himself but in God the Father – also borne out by historical evidence about Jesus; the centre, validation, hypostasis in the sense of that which assures perseverance, was his relationship to the Father with whose cause he identified. As this human being Jesus is constitutively 'allo-centric': oriented to the Father and to divinely conferred salvation for men; that is where he gets his own profile and face. It identifies Jesus of Nazareth. His autonomy as Jesus of Nazareth is his constitutive total relation to the one whom he calls 'Father', the God concerned with humanity. This is his *Abba* experience, soul, source and ground of all he did, his life and his death

Where did the experience come from? Every personal human experience, in all its originality, happens in a social experiential tradition and never derives purely from some interior plenitude without any intermediary factors. Jesus' human self-consciousness, like that of every human being, was shaped in and through the real world of living encounters in which he was situated – in his case Jewish piety, nourished by the synagogue, in a family in which it was the father's duty to initiate boys into the Law, God's revelation. His experience of the creator God, the lord of history, was nurtured partly by this living tradition; the living hand of God was experienced in nature and in the world of men. This creaturely consciousness, the living core of which is God's lordship, [659]

potentia, q. 9, a. 4); elsewhere he says: '*distinctio divinarum hypostasum est minina distinctio realis quae possit esse' (In I Sent.* d. 26, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2; *De potentia,* q. 9, a. 5, ad 2; *Contra Gentiles,* IV, 14; *Summa Tbeologiae,* I, q. 40, a. 2, ad 3). Thomas obviously wants to secure monotheism against any form of tritheism.

speaks clearly in Jesus' core message of God's reign. But in contrast to John the Baptist and the traditional prophetic legacy, he proclaims not God's eschatological judgment (although he does not suppress it) but God's approaching definitive salvation with a conviction that did not falter in face of death. Either this man lived in an illusion − as some might say, because after his death history simply continued as usual − or we put our trust in him, partly on the strength of his whole ministry and manner of dying, a trust which necessarily takes the form of a confession, namely that God vindicated him. Ultimately this latter, specifically Christian solution implies the confession that the coming salvation *is* the man Jesus, the risen crucified one. There really is no middle way: either it is an illusion or, if it comes from God (Acts 5:35-59), Jesus' message of approaching salvation is true, that is, a reality to be found nowhere but in the risen Jesus. In that case − if one does not endorse the illusion thesis − identification of God's coming kingdom with Jesus Christ is the sole appropriate response to Jesus' positive offer of salvation. However, that identification cannot be based simply on Jesus' creaturely status, which nonetheless underlay the message of God's reign and also, in an experience contrasting with historical events, engendered a prophetic consciousness − but not a God-given salvation identified with the person of Jesus himself.

Of course, this identification is made by Christians; *in itself* it appears to say nothing directly about Jesus' own *Abba* experience, unless we give credence to this experience: Jesus proclaimed God's approaching eschatological coming to be 'at hand'; God himself identifies this coming with the risen crucified one, acknowledged in faith by Christians: Jesus is eschatological salvation. In a formal, structuralist consideration of Scripture E. Haulotte's intuition strikes me as correct when he writes: *'Tout se passe comme si le propre de cet être (Jésus) était d'être dit par d'autres'*[8] (Jesus' being is such that it has to be identified by others). It cannot be otherwise, if Jesus' death is essentially part of God's message in Jesus and if the resurrection (accessible only to the believer's identifying faith) is integral to the salvific message from God. (Hence Christian
[660] tradition rightly insists that the apostolic witness is an essential part of the constitutive revelation in Jesus Christ.)

I have said that every creature, notwithstanding his unity, has two aspects: he is totally himself, and as such wholly 'of God'. We find the same two total aspects in Jesus − in a special way. In him the divine is disclosed only in a creaturely, human way, which in his case we might call 'human transcendence' or 'transcending humanity': eschatological humanity. But every revealed manifestation of God, including his manifestation in Jesus'

[8] E. Haulotte, 'Lisibilite' des "Ecritures"', in *Langages* 6 (1971), 103.

transcending humanity, is totally inadequate to convey God's divine transcendence. Consequently the man Jesus, God's personal revelation, also obscures God. Jesus' humanity not only manifests God, but also inwardly refers to the infinite divine transcendence, the ground of what is manifested in Jesus' human transcendence. We must not lose sight of the revelatory and concealing – or referential − character of Jesus' human transcendence or eminence. In other words, his human transcendence, by virtue of its intrinsically referential character, requires a deeper basis for the uniqueness of his *Abba* experience.

From Jesus' perspective he unmistakably prays to the Father; in other words, he has an interpersonal relationship with the Father; he speaks of 'my Father'. In contrast to the Father, Jesus unmistakably may be called a person. Although we have no solid historical data authentically derived from Jesus about the New Testament promise that Jesus will impart the Holy Spirit, all the gospels in all their traditions speak about the Christian experience of the eschatological gift of the Spirit, the '*other* paraclete', and do so in the context of God's coming reign as proclaimed by Jesus and their identification, in faith, of Jesus with the kingdom of God which accompanies Jesus' eschatological sending of the Spirit. In contrast with the Holy Spirit as well − albeit not in the same way as with the Father − Jesus is a person. This means that through and in the human person of Jesus God will become manifest to us as an interpersonal relationship between the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Proceeding from the person of Jesus, then, we have good grounds, albeit analogous and evocative, to call both the Father and the Holy Spirit persons; and through the contrast with both the Father and the Holy Spirit, Jesus reveals 'three persons' in God: Father, Jesus Christ and *Pneuma.* Any distinction between a Trinity in the economy of salvation and an intra-trinitarian Trinity is meaningless when it comes to the [661]
epistemological structure of an analogous approach (based on Jesus) that is conscious both of the finitude of the discourse but also of the firm basis (Jesus himself) of its epistemological intention. Thomas rightly said: these human concepts seek to express a reality in God but are not as such applicable to God;[9] they apply to the reality of God itself, but the divine mode of this application eludes us. In Jesus and from Jesus, at least in a human – hence alienated – fashion, something of the divine application emerges. Jesus' own humanity (nothing else) reveals the trinitarian God to us.

Having said this, the person of Jesus Christ still remains somewhat vague. It

[9] For Thomas the *res significata* and the *res concepta* are never an 'adequate' rendering; the act of *signifying* extends beyond the comprehensible clement of the concept. See E. Schillebeeckx, 'Het niet-begrippelijk kenmoment in onze Godskennis volgens Thomas van Aquino', in *Openbaring en Theologie* (ET *Revelation and Theology*, Vol. 2 of this series), Bilthoven 1966², especially 207-213 and 215-232. Let it be said that Thomas knows nothing of the implications of what moderns call the 'father symbol' and 'symbol theory' in general.

is said that via Jesus we know that God is tri-personal: Father, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit. Since it is through Jesus that God's intrinsic fullness is revealed to us, which we cannot know from creation, the conception is expressed anthropomorphically, yet it goes beyond actual anthropomorphism. Jesus' *Abba* experience, because of the emphasis on doing the Father's will, shows that the intended correlate of 'Father' is obviously 'the Son'. Thus the fullness or trinity of God's absolute oneness revealed through Jesus is: Father, *Son* and Holy Spirit. As a revelation of God, therefore, Jesus does not constitute what in God corresponds to the 'Son of God', the Father and the Spirit. The man Jesus is nevertheless the basis that enables us to denote the intra-trinitarian reality with our human concept of 'person', because the man Jesus is identified with intra-trinitarian reality, and in that context is called Son of God. That is why his humanity is able to *reveal* the trinitarian unity and why, on the basis of this Jesus as identified with the Son, we may legitimately speak of three divine persons (albeit on the strength of the man Jesus, hence a human concept of personhood).

This lands us in deep water. The gospels do not speak of 'persons' in God, neither do the first great christological councils; and when we speak of persons the whole philosophical and semantic history of the concept 'person' rears its head. What is a 'divine person' when we speak about God, albeit analogously, in terms of a human concept of personhood, this being one of the most debated concepts in the entire history of philosophy? More especially, does the fact that Jesus is Son of God preclude his human personhood? In other words, what is
[662] the positive point of denying Jesus' human anhypostasy? The two questions are closely interconnected.

It is not a problem one can solve with a wave of the hand by invoking the everyday concept of person, for that actually covers up its problematic nature. Linguistic analysis, insofar as its point of departure is 'ordinary language', has engaged intensively with the concept of person; but though the writings of P.F. Strawson, S. Hampshire and G. Ryle have managed to shed some light on it, they have not resolved the problem. Worth mentioning is Strawson's attempt − in his 'descriptive metaphysics' based on everyday language − to expose the foundations and basic structures of our human conceptual system.[10] Like Aristotle before him, he looks for fundamental categories and generally valid universals in human thinking: 'a massive central core of human thinking which had no history';[11] and that massive core consists of certain basic concepts: 'There are categories and concepts which, in their most fundamental character, change not at all' (loc. cit.). Apropos what I said above, we are

[10] P.F. Strawson, *Individuals. An essay in descriptive metaphysics* (London 1959).
[11] L.c., 10.

operating on the plane of 'structural history', the all but immutable core in the history of human thinking. And that is where the concept of person belongs. According to Strawson's analysis, the structure of this concept implies that a subject, a person, cannot posit himself without at the same time affirming the other, the fellow person. Without affirming the other I have no idea of what I am as a person.[12] In other words, personhood implies interpersonal recognition. This already leads to the assumption that if God is personal (an infra-personal notion of God makes no sense), he will in some way be 'interpersonal' as well; to put it more accurately (in terms of the Christian confession): the Trinity is the *fullness* of God's personal, absolute unity, hence God, without any becoming (in the sense of growing towards or into his own definition), is nonetheless eternally youthful and intrinsically dynamic − Life, not an impassive self-contemplator.

Although always in a different conjunctural hermeneutic horizon, this basic concept of the human person crops up whenever people reflect on personhood. Even medieval theologians, who did not analyse intersubjectivity, saw the *divisum ab alio,* in other words, the 'other person', as prerequisite for the definition of personhood. In patristics it was no different.[13] I conclude: the so-called modern concept of person differs from that of, for instance, the Council of Chalcedon, not structurally but 'superficially', that is, conjuncturally. It is in [663] fact the structural elements that create the possibility of a highly dynamic interpretation of the concept – the very definition of all that is dynamic! Thus W. Pannenberg, in his *Grundzüge der Christologie,* was able to sidestep a lot of problems by speaking only about the structural elements of the concept of person and, wisely, ignoring the primarily modern conjunctural aspect, namely, the person as conscious centre of action with his own irreducible consciousness and freedom. Thomas Aquinas was not afraid to tackle the problem, but had to accept the consequence: formally the three divine persons are *not distinct as persons* but rather as in origin antithetical relations (see above); he was apparently forced to that conclusion because God has only one consciousness and one freedom, the single consciousness and freedom of the three divine persons. One may question whether this unity is really a counter

[12] On the concept of 'person': l.c., especially 87-116.

[13] See e.g. Fr. Erdin, *Das Wort Hypostasis. Seine bedeutungsgeschichtliche Entwicklung in der altchristlichen Literatur bis zum Abschlug der trinitarischen Auseinandersetzungen* (Freiburg 1939); G. Kretschmar, *Studien zur frühchristlichen Trinitätstheologie* (Tübingen 1956); A. Malet, *Personne et amour dans la théologie trinitaire de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris 1956); J. Schneider, *Die Lehre vom Dreieinigen Gott in der Schule des Petrus Lombardus* (Munich 1961); J. Jolivet, *Godescale d'Orbais et la Trinité. La méthode de la théologie à l'époque carolingienne* (Paris 1958); M. Bergeron, *La structure du concept latin de personne* (Ottawa-Paris 1932); M. Marshall, 'Boethius' definition of person and medieval understanding of the Roman theatre', in *Speculum* 25 (1950), 471-482; I. Backes, *Die Christologie des hl. Thomas von Aquin und die Griechischen Kirchenväter* (Paderborn 1931); V. Schurr, *Die Trinitätslehre des Boëthius im Liechte der skytischen Kontroversen* (Paderborn 1935), especially 108-232.

indication, since even love among human beings already speaks in terms of 'one mind' and 'one will'. What is the divine mode of this in God? The to us inconceivable absolutely unified freedom and mind of the three persons, fullness of unity, no rigid, solitary over-definition. In other words, Thomas, too, falls back on the structural elements of the concept of person: the essentially relational nature of personal reality, the orientation towards fellow persons, while (in God) the orientation is grounded in the one divine nature or the one divine freedom. In this view the concept of 'person' supplies what (because of a reaction against a fossilized concept of 'person') process theology still deems necessary (as a 'consequent nature' in God) in order to preserve the dynamics of God's being, or what Palamism still deems necessary (namely the distinction between God's 'nature' − *ousia* − and his 'energies') in order to preserve the same dynamics in the divine essence. Both are propitious reactions to an un-Christian *Deus immutabilis.*

This relational aspect (remarkable as it may seem) is more accessible to our human understanding than the actual nature of the (other-oriented) 'I'! (Child psychologists have ascertained that even babies discover 'the other' first, and only then the world and themselves.) It may be that one really becomes a person only when one is not concerned with one's own identity but, losing oneself, identifies with the other.

Characteristic of the twofold aspect in the concept of person are the two definitions that dominated medieval theology: those of Boëthius[14] and of Richard of St Victor.[15] Boëthius (deliberately trying to allow for both Chalcedon
[664] and neo-Chalcedonism) does tell us the nature of a person, namely a concrete substance or nature capable of consciousness and freedom, but he does not say how a person arrives at personhood. Richard of St. Victor says that he ignores the source, the relation to the person who makes one a person; Boëthius passes over the *unde habeat esse.* The result is, as deacon Rusticus had already observed before him, that according to Boëthius's definition the man Jesus must really be called a human person, but the definition does not apply to the Trinity;[16] in other words, Boëthius's concept of person seems to be quite useless theologically, whether the context is christological or trinitarian. As a result early scholasticism introduced the concept of totality into the Western notion of personhood: someone cannot be simultaneously 'two persons', for that would make each of them a part of one undivided whole − which contradicts the essence of the concept of personhood. On the basis of his concretely human, formally spiritual nature, Jesus would actually have to be

[14] *Opuscula sacra,* tract. 5, *Opusculum contra Eutychen et Nestorium,* 2: 'Reperta personae est igitur definitio: persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia' (PL 64, 1343).
[15] *De trinitate,* 4: 'intellectualis naturae incommunicabilis existentia' (PL 196, especially 944-945).
[16] *Contra acephalos disputatio* (PL 67, 1195-1196; 1238-1241).

called a human person without further ado, says Rusticus,[17] but because he forms an indivisible unity with the Word that is not applicable in his particular case: only 'the single whole' is a person. Thus one accepts the human/personalistic character of Jesus' humanity and, on the basis of the *enhypostasis*, one ascribes to him a more or less nominal *anhypostasis,* since Jesus actually loses none of his real humanity. These were extremely subtle, knife-edge discussions – the schoolmen tried to strike a balance between the demands of philosophical anthropology and what they saw as the demands of faith, based on dogma. Remarkably, in his doctrine of the Trinity Thomas, who particularly in his anthropology uses Boëthius's definition of a person, augments it with Richard's interrelational concept of a person and Rusticus's notion of totality.[18] These three elements of the concept of person resurface in present-day linguistic analysis!

Since the Enlightenment a new debate on personhood has erupted. In the battle over atheism in 1798 J. G. Fichte said that God could not be thought of as a person without inner contradiction. For Fichte the concept of person essentially implied finitude. For 'person' necessarily calls for a partner, a *vis-à-vis* over against the other − something or someone else. Put differently, the concept of 'not I', the 'thou' and the 'it', essentially belongs to the concept of 'I' (*Du und Es*). An 'I' that professes to be everything, all, without an 'opposite' is sheer nonsense. Personhood is essentially limited and finite, hence God is no person. Hegel reacts against Fichte's reasoning (one of the foundations of [665] Feuerbach's atheism). He concedes that 'person' implies an 'opposite', but not necessarily outside itself, delimiting the 'I'. On the contrary, it belongs to the essence of personhood to be involved with an opposite in such a way that the I 'externalizes' itself in an opposite in order to find itself anew in the other thing/being, be it the thing which the 'I' fashions or recognizes, or the 'Thou' to whom the 'I' relates in love and friendship. A person discovers himself in the other inasmuch as he has surrendered and yielded himself to the other. So in personal life the *opposition* to the other − finitude, therefore − is annulled and overcome. Person as person, that is, the very essence of personhood, includes infinity. Hence God, the Trinity, is the supreme, unique realization of personhood. This does not preclude the existence of finite persons, but their finitude obviously imposes a limitation on personhood. As a person the human person is delimited by and marked off from other human persons; he is delimited by the other. He can only partially overcome the antithesis with the other; nobody can identify totally with another person. Thus man is a person

[17] L.c. (PL 67, 1239).

[18] In particular *Quaest. Disp. de potentia,* q. 9, a. 4. The three characteristics of 'being a person': (a) *substantia completa*, (b) *per se subsistens*, (c) *separatim ab aliis* (see especially *In III Sent.* d. 5, q. 1, a. 3). What it amounts to for Thomas is a threefold incommunicability (see also: *Summa Tbeologiae,* III, q. 2, art. 2, c. and ad 1, ad 2, ad 3; I, 29, art. 4).

in an attenuated, alienated sense, not in the full sense of the word.

This Hegelian concept of personhood contains a great deal − albeit in a different field − of the turbulent controversy about the person dating back to the patristic period and to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as a lot of inspiration drawn from the Christian confession of the Trinity. Modern phenomenology of the person largely concurs with the Hegelian concept. Being oneself, but by giving oneself to the other in whom one finds oneself anew – either completely or with some alienation − is the present-day concept of a person. It coincides with what we might call the structural elements of personhood.

If we now take as our starting-point, not this modern concept of the person, but simply what has been manifested concretely in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, it is remarkable how these real data about Jesus are readily comprehensible within the structural elements of the concept of person.

After all, our premise is definitive salvation from God in Jesus of Nazareth, the risen crucified one. 'It is God who delivers us in Jesus Christ' (see 2 Cor. 5:19). God delivers us, but in and through the man Jesus, his message, life and death. The question is: is it possible for Jesus of Nazareth, within the confines
[666] of human personhood, to actualize the essential nature of a divine person, that is, to be himself in radical self-giving to the other − which within the Godhead would include no element of alienation or limitation? Can this divine self-giving also be experienced within the limitations of human personhood, that is, in radical self-giving to and identification with the Father and with others, fellow men, and even with those who reject him and cast him out? If so, the *human limitations* within which God's redeeming salvation or self-giving is accomplished in Jesus then become the space in which God's radical self-giving in the alienation of human life and death becomes a *historical reality*. Then the concept or, more accurately, the reality of human personhood is what we need to make the depth of God's redemptive self-giving comprehensible without transposing suffering, death and alienation to God but leaving them where they in fact belong, in the earthly reality of human existence. In that way limitation, human alienation and death are ultimately *overcome* and the finite is redeemed: man's humanity is freed to *accept its finitude*, its 'being of God'. God's eschatological promise rests on everything that is done for love's sake in our human world. Salvation in Jesus is given by God − and yet is historically transmitted by our concrete history: it is a healing, through which limitation and alienation, impotence and even death, are finally overcome; finitude itself − for that is what we are − is redeemed: in Jesus man's humanity is freed to redeemed and redemptive acceptance of the fact that by grace alone we are able and allowed to realize our *essential promise* (which we are for one another), and that we may experience the call to love that is beyond every one of us,

individually and communally, person and society, in a redemptive experience of *absolute assurance* that transcends us, yet is in no respect alien to our humanity: the living God!

Actually this says nothing that we did not already know from our analysis of the gospels; it is merely a trinitarian explication of the Christ-mystery, which according to the Christian creed is the redemptive revelation of the mystery of God, the trinitarian fullness of absolute unity: God as the essential gift in the necessary existence of absolute freedom. Thus the true face of God is shown to us in the humanity of Jesus. We have said that Jesus' unique turning to the Father is 'preceded' in absolute priority and supported by the Father's absolute turning to Jesus, and that this self-communication of the Father is what early Christian tradition calls 'the Word'. Thus the Word of God, the Father's self-communication, is the very ground underlying the *Abba* experience. This in [667] fact means something like a 'hypostatic identification' without *anhypostasis*: within the human limitations of (psychological and ontological) human personhood this man, Jesus, is identical with the Son, that is, the second person of the trinitarian fullness of divine unity, the second which achieves *human* self-consciousness and shared humanity in Jesus. Identity between two *finite* modes of personhood (two persons in one) is indeed an inner contradiction; but identity of finite human personhood and divine, infinite (hence *analogous*) personhood is no contradiction, since the distinction between creature and God does not lie in the perfection of the creature but in its finitude, while everything positive in it nonetheless derives totally from God. Creature and God can never be added the one to the other. The constitutive relation to God is intrinsic in the existential and personal core of each creature. Thus, because of the hypostatic identification of that in God whose manifestation in Jesus we call 'Son of God', with Jesus' human personhood, the man Jesus has a constitutive (filial) relationship with the Father, a relation that in the dynamics of Jesus' human life develops into a deepening, mutual *enhypostasis,* reaching an acme in the resurrection. In this respect Jesus stands over against the Father and the Spirit, but not over against the Son of God! In him the one divine consciousness and absolute freedom, experienced 'filially' within the Godhead (in perfect union with the Father), is rendered human in alienation, becoming a humanly conscious centre of action and human (situated) freedom. In that sense Jesus' personhood is not extrinsic to his humanity; yet ultimately one cannot (without all sorts of qualifications) call him simply a 'human person', for that would create an inconceivable 'opposite' between the man Jesus and the Son of God. A theory along these lines has in fact been consistently propounded by Léon Seiller, following Deodatus de Basly:[19] one might say that

[19] L. Seiller, *L'Activité humaine du Christ selon Duns Scot* (Paris 1944).

the Word itself became a 'human person' without making any 'opposite' between the man Jesus and the Son of God. But that strikes me as impossible without positing what is tentatively suggested by 'hypostatic identification' (I prefer this term to *unio hypostatica*). This fact (approachable only with Jesus as starting point) suggests that in Jesus' human life the Father 'personhood' differs greatly from that of the Son – which may be why Eastern Christology
[668] and trinitarian doctrine call the Father 'the font of the Godhead'. When, proceeding from Jesus, we finally reach the Trinity, we are better able to understand Jesus in that context − bearing in mind that this is theology 'raised to the power of three'!

All this implies that God does not *become* trinitarian only when Jesus Christ becomes man; I find the idea inconceivable. What is clear to me is that the fact that we call the Trinity three divine *persons* is possible and meaningful only on the basis of the man Jesus. Our human history, in which Jesus himself participates, is significant for God's own life. He is not impassive or impervious − the Bible makes that quite clear! Seen thus process philosophy[20] with its distinction between existential non-dependence and actual dependence in God definitely has a point, though the term 'consequent nature' is unfortunate. The distinction does not seem necessary to me for those who affirm the dynamics of God's eternally youthful being, an eternity in which pure, absolute freedom entails no contingency. In God there is no 'natural necessity' at all, and no 'necessary nature'. He is pure, absolute freedom in his very being, which also means that he is true to himself and his creation. Concepts such as 'nature' and 'person' in themselves are inadequate to convey God's absolute freedom. From our angle, what is without contingency or becoming in God is sheer contingency. We should rather say (in view of the de facto reality of our history and of Jesus) that, on the one hand, God would not be God without creatures and Jesus of Nazareth, and, on the other hand, we and Jesus (viewed from our side) could have *not existed*. To my mind this *tension* affords a better perspective on the divine, essential being of God and the creatureliness of our history than the circuitous distinctions (under Hegelian influence) of process philosophy, which to some extent is also trying to articulate mystery, but without sufficient regard to the conjunction of God's

[20] 'Process philosophy' is based on principles enunciated by two American philosophers (of religion): Alfred N. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. See especially A. Whitehead, *Process and reality* (New York 1929); *Religion in the making* (New York 1926); Ch. Hartshorne, *The divine reality. A social conception of God* (New Haven 1948, 1964[2]); see also the Festschrift *Process and divinity. The Hartshorne festschrift* (W. Reese and E. Freeman, eds), La Salle (Illinois) 1964; further: E.R. Baltazar, *God within process* (New York-London 1970). Theologians who have worked out a 'process theology' are, in particular: Norman Pittenger, *Process thought and Christian faith* (New York-London 1968); *Christology reconsidered* (London 1970), and *'The last things' in a process perspective* (London 1970) (in which a completely intramundane eschatology is expounded), and to some extent Sch. Ogden, *The reality of God and other essays* (London 1963, 1967[3]).

non-mutability (more apposite than 'immutability') with the eternal dynamics of the essence of absolute freedom, which − in our faltering human discourse − is eternal 'newness' without growth or what in a this-worldly context we call mutability. Because of the inadequacy of our talk about God, making such distinctions in his being seems to me a perilous undertaking.

Jesus of Nazareth, the risen crucified one, is the Son of God as an actual, contingent man: in the existential mode of genuine, uncurtailed historical [669] human nature he brought us − through his person, preaching, praxis life and death − the living message of the limitless self-giving which God is in himself and wants to be for us human beings. Given the contingent, non-necessary *fact* of our history − and the Jesus event in it − God would nonetheless not be God without this historical happening. Hence this, our history (which in itself could just as well not have happened) is still the only realistic way for us to speak meaningfully about God's essential being. Through his historical self-giving, accepted by the Father, Jesus showed us who God is: a *Deus humanissimus.* For the rest, how the man Jesus can and may also be the form and aspect of a present divine 'person', the Son, transcending our future through overwhelming immanence, is in my view a theoretically unfathomable mystery, despite the non-contradiction that we recognize and Jesus of Nazareth's meaningful enactment of it. *Anagkè stènai:* sometimes it is high time − and high tide! − for silent praise and adoration, and for critical recollection of the great tradition of *theologia negativa.* Ultimately, despite all we know about God we do not know *who* he is.

This book – which I did, after all, call a prolegomenon − requires a complement in the form of what I would call a reflection on grace: an exposition, that is, in a modern hermeneutic and existential horizon, of the problem of redemption and emancipation – the present-day problem of our history of liberation. So the book may yet have a sequel.

Chapter 3

THEORETICAL CHRISTOLOGY, STORY AND PRAXIS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the end the coming salvation imparted by God, which Jesus proclaimed and for which he lived and died, the reign of God directed to mankind, seems to be the person of Jesus Christ himself: the eschatological man Jesus of Nazareth, who is exalted to sit beside God and who, of his plenitude, sends us God's Spirit, thus opening up 'communication' among human beings. Thus Jesus of [670]
Nazareth in his own person reveals the eschatological face of all mankind and, in so doing, the trinitarian fullness of God's unity of being as a gift to man in essence and absolute freedom. Jesus' humanity is God translated for us. His human pro-existence is the sacrament among us of the pro-existence or self-giving of God's own being. In Jesus God willed to be God for us in human fashion and in his Son. The unique universality, then, lies in Jesus' eschatological humanity, sacrament of God's universal love for man. Forgetting himself, Jesus identified completely with God's cause as the cause of man. God also identified himself with this identification of Jesus; that is, Jesus is the firstborn of God's kingdom. God's cause as the cause of man is personified in the person of Jesus Christ. In a way this is the sole core of what we call Christianity. This also affirms Jesus' role as universal intermediary. He is the firstborn, the 'leader' of a new mankind in that he enacted the praxis of God's kingdom proleptically and this praxis was ratified by God. Hence Jesus did not bring a new total system, in which everything is made comprehensible and finds a meaningful place. Every theoretical total system, both before and after Jesus, remains an ideology; our human history remains completely open. But the praxis of the eschatological kingdom was indeed made possible in this world, in our history. History itself falls under a *promise* that summons us to prayer and action − but a philosophy or theology of history remains impossible, theoretically inadequate and open. Thus what happened to Jesus can still happen to many people: murder of the innocent. The prophet Micah's

admonition also applies to believers in Christ: 'Yet they lean upon the Lord and say: Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us' (Micah 3:10-11). But it may well come upon us, as it did upon Jesus, and then our trust in God will indeed face its supreme test. God's salvation in Jesus can never be reduced to a theoretically closed system. 'Blessed is he who is not offended in me.'

Although the Christian explication of Jesus of Nazareth (who proclaimed God's reign, criticized human conduct and led the way in the praxis of God's kingdom) turns out to be intrinsically necessary (because of the figure of Jesus), it can give rise to some dangerous secondary phenomena. The process of christologizing Jesus of Nazareth may indeed paralyse or neutralize his
[671] message and praxis by forgetting Jesus of Nazareth and retaining only a heavenly mystery cult: the great Christ icon, pushed so far over to God's side (God himself having already been ousted from the human world) that he, Jesus Christ, ceases to have any critical power in this world. Fighting for Jesus' divinity in a world which has long ago bid God farewell may well be a battle lost before it is even begun. It also fails to grasp the deepest intention of God's plan of salvation, namely that God wanted to encounter us in human fashion, so that we might ultimately find him. If we want to respect God's saving purpose, we will place ourselves under the critique of the human Jesus; only then will we gain insight into the living God. This requires patience – also catechetically. To put it crudely: whereas God is bent on showing himself in human form, we on our side dismiss this human aspect as quickly as we can in order to admire a 'divine icon' whose critical prophetic features have all been smoothed away. Thus we 'neutralize' the critical power of God himself and run the risk simply of adding another ideology to the many mankind already possesses: Christology! I sometimes fear that the keen edge of our credal statements about Jesus dulls the critical vision of his prophecy, which has real socio-political consequences. One-sided divinization of Jesus, that is, pushing him exclusively to God's side, is indeed to get rid of a historical nuisance, a killjoy spoiling our fun, and to rid history of a dangerous memory of provocative, living prophecy – as well as a way of silencing Jesus the prophet! The response to such a Christology is: 'Why do you call me "Lord, Lord", and not do what I tell you? . . . Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity' (Lk. 6:46 and 13:27). It is good, at the end of this christological section − as theology raised to the second and even the third power – to state this explicitly.

Yet Jesus' unique universal significance, which (according to the Christian creed) affects all human beings by determining their destiny, is also historically transmitted through his eschatological assembly of believers, the church of Christ. Conjoining Jesus' *historical* significance and his *universal* significance is the church's historical mission in the world. That is the unforgettable, perilous

significance of what the New Testament calls Jesus' appearances. The universality of Jesus Christ, the 'catholicity' of his church and the missionary witness (especially through praxis of the kingdom of God) of the Christian [672] churches are so many facets of one and the same, always historically transmitted religious reality: diaconal service rendered in faith by men, guided by the Spirit of Christ. Thus, in the power of Jesus' Spirit, the church conveys the manner in which God is actively working with all human beings. In other words, the unique universality of Jesus is concretely a Christian historical mandate, 'that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent' (Jn. 17:3), thanks to the church's praxis of the kingdom of God. Such a definition of the nature of the church is performative, not simply a description of the actual form of the phenomenon – even though this essence always finds expression 'somewhere', for example, in the anonymous activities of so many ordinary Christians – both lay people and junior and senior clergy! 'Anonymous Christians' are found primarily in the churches! Across denominational divisions Christians discover one another in this active fellowship. This is why institutional ecumenical acknowledgment of one Christianity is a primary, pressing prerequisite − recognizing oneself in a differently constituted but real Christianity. And then − from the diversified yet fundamentally one Christianity of the New Testament − I think we cultivate divisions where, according to New Testament values, they are no longer tenable.

There is yet another aspect which may have become clear in light of the eschatological man Jesus, the Son of God. For us the future is not a hope still to be fulfilled as long as we ourselves have not come to terms with the past. A future is only opened up if we are reconciled to the past. Redemption is not just the prospect of a new future; it becomes that only through the conquest of past history by way of reconciliation with our own past. Redemption is to be reconciled to one's past in a way that permits renewed confidence in the future. The latter is impossible without the former. 'Being justified', as a religious term, means being reconciled with God's way of doing things, hence with history, one's own past, one's own life and death, and having confidence in the future. All this is the consequence of what Jesus calls *metanoia* as a result of the coming reign of God. *Metanoia* entails having settled accounts with the past and going to meet the future confidently − a future which nonetheless remains open, does not exclude risk and cannot be theoretically shielded. The churches of Christ are the space in which Jesus' unique universality can be experienced, or in which it is obscured, so that even the world vanishes in the fog.

Why, ultimately, anyone trusts a person is a mystery. One can adduce various [673] reasons − psychological, biographic, sociological, cultural, familial; they are

relevant, rightly, within each of these narrow explanatory fields. But they leave the mystery of the person intact and can never explain religious trust. Neither does God's grace offer an explanation. To speak of God's saving work is to speak in credal language about the human mystery of trust in someone. In some way everyone lives on the basis of 'models', and nobody can ever supply rationally cogent grounds for trusting someone else. Yet to be able to trust a person and not just rashly rely on his trustworthiness substantial information about his life, conduct and death is prerequisite. That is why I expanded on these at length in Parts One, Two and Three. It also suggests reasons why we should sort out what we as Christians believe. Having insight into a meaningful life, especially that of Jesus of Nazareth, leads to *metanoia*, to taking stock of one's life and discovering in what small measure we live Christian lives and that even among Christians consistent praxis of God's kingdom is rare. News of Jesus, ultimately the *euaggelion,* raises the question of how we in fact live; the effect, after initial disorientation, is liberating!

Christology often becomes a matter of system and systematization, for which Jesus of Nazareth, teller of parables, champion of men, who went about doing good and was at the same time a mystic and an exegete of God, merely provides the occasion. This is not meant to silence ongoing discussion or put a stop to reflection; on the contrary. It simply expresses the holy reticence with which we ought to approach the mystery of the love and solidarity of a fellow man filled with God's Spirit. At the same time it invites us to combine theoretical theology with stories (neither too soon nor too late) and more especially with orthopraxis, that is, praxis of the kingdom of God, without which every theory and every story loses its plausibility − certainly in a world crying vainly for justice and liberation. Then and only then will theory, story and parable – in conjunction with the praxis of God's kingdom – become a real invitation to the world to answer, in true freedom, the question: 'But you − you who read this − whom do you say that I, Jesus of Nazareth, am?'

Epilogue: postscript to the story of the crippled man

[674] This book begins with the story from Acts (4:10-12) about the village cripple who was cured when he heard Peter tell the story of Jesus. Martin Buber, too, recognizes the power of story telling when he has a rabbi relate the following: 'My grandfather was paralysed. One day he was asked to tell about something that had happened to his teacher, the great Baalshem. Then he told how the saintly Baalshem used to leap about and dance while praying. As he went on with the story my grandfather stood up; he was so caught up in the story that he had to show what the master had done and started to caper about and dance. From that moment on he was cured. That is how stories should be

told.'[1]

If this book, the story of the living Jesus, serves to rekindle faith which tells stories[2] with practical, critical impact based on prayerful lingering in the precincts of God's kingdom and its praxis, I would consider myself blessed. If not, then as far as I am concerned it may join the list of second-hand books tomorrow.

[1] M. Buber, *Werke,* vol. 3 (Munich 1963), 71.
[2] K. Derksen, 'Vertellend geloven', in *Reliëf* 41 (1973), 230-44. See literature: Part One, Section One, Chapter Two, p. [077], note 1.

Technical Information

A. EXPLANATION OF SOME TECHNICAL AND UNFAMILIAR TERMS

Note. - This list contains just a few technical terms presently used in exegesis, theology or general literary studies, not dealt with - or insufficiently dealt with - elsewhere. Not included are notions (like 'son of man', 'apocalypticism'). What the list does include, for the reader's convenience, are technical or unfamiliar terms which are explained on their first appearance in the book but then recur throughout it without any further explanation being given. For some concepts, which among exegetes are taken for granted (for instance, *Formgeschichte,* semiotic analysis), a lengthier account was called for in this vocabulary because trying to explain them within the text of the book would unnecessarily obscure the drift of the narrative, while on the other hand one cannot assume that they are well known. [737]

Aeon: 738
Aporia: 738
Anamnesis: 738
An-hypostasis (see: Hypostasis).
Apocryphal: 738
Aretalogy: 739
Articulation (of faith): 740
Canonical: 740
Chasidism, Chasidic: 740
Christological: 740
Cipher (chiffre): 741
Commonplace (see: Topical/topos).
Deutero- and Trito-Isaianic: 741
Deuteronomistic 741
Disclosure and disclosure experience: 742
En-hypostasis (see: Hypostasis).
Epiphany (and epiphanous): 742
Eschatological: 742
Etiological story: 743
Experiential (and intellective) horizon: 743
Form Criticism (see: *Formgeschichte).*
Formgeschichte: 744
Gnosis (gnostic andgnosticism): 744
Hermeneusis and hermeneutics: 745
Homology: 745
Hypostasis: 745
Intellective horizon (see: Experiential).
Interpretation, matter for (= interpretandum) and interpretation (= interpretative element): 746
Intertestamentary literature (see: Apocryphal).
Kerygma(tic): 746
Kyrial: 747
Linguistic signals: 747
Memoria Jesu (see: Anamnesis).
Metanoia: 747

Ontological: 747
Orthopraxis: 747
Paradigm: 747
Paraenesis (paraenetic): 748
Performative utterance: 748
Pre-existence and pro-existence: 748
Prolegomenon: 749
Pseudepigrapha (see: Apocryphal).
*Redaktionsgeschichte:*749
Sapiential: 749
Semiotics and structuraltextual analysis: 749
Sicarii (see: Zealots).
Soteriology: 751
applica-Synoptists: 751
Thematizing: 751
Theologoumenon: 752
Topical and topos: 752
Traditionsgeschichte: 752
Trito-andDeutero-Isaianic(see: Deutero-Isaianic).
Updating (i.e. contemporarytion): 75 3
Zealots and *sicarii* or 'brigands': 75

[738] *Aeon*

From the Greek *aiōn:* time, time of life, period of time; hence, the time of the world's existence as the time of the whole of earthly history; finally also eternity. In this book the word only occurs in connection with apocalyptic: the old aeon and the new. The old aeon is the period of our history, seen as a history of suffering; the new aeon is the universal time of wellbeing without tears and injustice. This is understood as eternity beyond this earth, but also and above all as an indeterminate period of wellbeing on earth after the sudden intervention of God, who brings about the transformation of the ages(see also: Eschatological).

Aporia

From the Greek *aporia (a-poros* means 'no exit', 'no thoroughfare': in fact, a blind alley, a dead end). We mayresolve a difficulty, arising out of a particular way of posing a problem, in such a way that a further difficulty emerges, and within the framework of the problems thus formulated we eventually argue ourselves to a standstill; that is, from within the system itself there is no longer a way out. We are then obliged to formulate, articulate the original problem quite differently, in order to escape from the *aporia.*

Anamnesis

From the Greek for: 'recollection', 'memory' *(anamnesis).* This foreign word is used in this book only when a 'recollection of Jesus' *(memoria Jesu)* does not have a purely historical reference but ashistorical concern is subsumed within an experience, prompted by and affirming faith, of the risen and living Lord.

Apocryphal

Apokruphon means 'concealed'. The official (early) church called those writings apocryphal which for the public church were not 'officially' or 'openly' acknowledged but were, so to speak, 'hidden': that is, had no importance as setting a standard for faith, and on that account were not incorporated into the canonical holy scriptures, in spite of their religious (Jewish or Christian) content. In particular we speak of apocryphal 'gospels' (e.g., Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, etc.), 'Acts of the apostles' (e.g.,*Acta Thomae,* etc.), and then also Jewish or Christian apocalypses which are not canonical, unlike our four gospels, (Luke's) 'Acts of the Apostles' and the Apocalypse or in the New Testament 'Book of Revelation'. As regards the Old Testament, Catholics and [739] Protestants clearly differ in official appreciation of certain books, specifically, the Book of Wisdom, the first two books of Maccabees, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Tobit, Judith and, lastly, some Greek fragments in Esther and Daniel. Since the sixteenth century these parts of the Bible have been referred to by Catholics as 'deutero-canonical' books (canonical but secondary), because they have not been regarded by all Christian churches from the beginning as canonical; principally they werebooks revered by Greek-speaking Jews, but not regarded by Hebrew- or Aramaic-speaking Jews to belong to the Jewish canon. Catholics also regard these books as canonical, whereas Protestants call them apocryphal. 'Apocryphal' describes those particular parts of the Bible, called by Catholics canonical, but regarded by Protestants as non-canonical (and thusuninspired), while the latter give the name of 'pseudepigrapha' to those (Jewish or Christian) works which Catholics call 'apocrypha' (see further: Intertestamentary literature). Hence the shifting meaning of the term 'apocryphal', according to whether it is used by Catholics or Protestants, because the latter also regard the Catholic, so-called 'deutero-canonical' books as 'pseudepigrapha', that is, as apocryphal: falling outside the 'canonical Bible'. Hence, too, a certain confessional difference in what we call 'intertestamentary literature', that is, the extra-canonical literature, of Jewish or even of Christian inspiration, of the period as it were 'between' (or concomitant with) the canonical, recent 'Old Testament' and the 'New Testament' literature. After a certain hesitation regarding the canonicity of some Christian literature (the Letter to the Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, James, Jude and the Book of Revelation), this New Testament literature is now also generally accepted as canonical by Protestants (along with the Catholics). In 'purely critical' study of the ancient Jewish and Christian literature I make no distinction between canonical books regarded by the Jewish and Christian faiths as 'inspired by God' and the contemporary 'uninspired' Jewish and Christian literature.

Aretalogy

This term is fully dealt with in the text. Therefore, a short summary: the Greek word *arête* means virtue, wisdom and heroic valour, strength. 'Aretalogy' is a sort of pagan equivalent of Christian hagiography and the lives of themartyrs, in which are celebrated - usually with a degree of exaggeration -with reverence and enthusiasm the admirable lives of wise or brave individuals. Aretalogy, then, is a literary genre in which the lives of these people are described to edify the rest of us. Their relevance for us is expressed through their final 'elevation' (exaltation) to be among the gods (from whom they came) and because in the literary genre of 'manifestations' (after their death) they are enabled in person to explain the essential significance of their lives.

[740] *Articulation (of faith)*

'Articulation' is the result of a thematizing: that is to say, it is the explicit expression, in a well considered formulation, of what to begin with was substantially given in a (faith-motivated) experience, albeit to some extent so far not articulated or enunciated. At the same time, however, there enters into the idea of 'articulating' something of the Latin word *artus,* that is, 'joint'. Hence the medieval expression *articulus fidei* or article of faith, in the sense of a cardinal (*cardo:* hinge) junctural element. Bringing a faith-motivated experience to articulation *qua* belief entails formulating a given matter of belief in such a way as to illuminate its relevance and affinity to the message at the heart of the gospel.

Canonical

In Greek *Kanon* means 'guiding principle, norm'; hence: canonical, that which sets the standard, in the sense of a norm and criterion. In this book it is used only for what is the norm, criterion, guiding principle for the authenticity or proper orientation of the Christian faith: namely, the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments. Those early Christian documents are canonical which were acknowledged by the Christian churches as the official expression of their common faith and were officially endorsed as such by the church leaders; as such they are to be distinguished from Jewish and early Christian literature of the same period, from apocryphal and heretical literature. 'Pre-canonical' means (apropos of the New Testament): the Christian interpretations of Jesus which were in circulation (orally or perhaps in writing) even before the canonical writings of the New Testament had appeared; those canonical writings drew their material from 'precanonical' sources, handing on, correcting and synthesizing these traditions, especially in the context of faith in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Chasidism, Chasidic

By this we mean not the similarly named medieval Jewish school of spirituality, but a particular form and expression of piety in the course which ancient Judaism took from the time of the Maccabean struggle against the imposition of Greek culture on Jewish life. 'Chasidim' (= pious ones) in the technical sense emerged from an amalgam of diverse, already existing heterogeneous groups that occurred in the period after the Book of Sirach; they form an eschatologically orientated, 'radical change' movement, inspired by the Deuteronomistic view of history and sapiential ideas. In the middle of the second century BC the Chasidic movement disintegrated, giving rise then to both Essenes and Pharisees. 'Chasidism' was a lively tradition in Jesus' time.

Christological

This means, in the book: identifying Jesus of Nazareth as someone who on behalf of God, brings definitive and decisive salvation to men. Further to [741] expatiate upon and develop this identification, by thematizing it, and through examining its implications, is thus 'to be doing christology'. Christology therefore is a reflection, at one remove and in a context of faith, on the historical phenomenon of Jesus of Nazareth.

Cipher (chiffre)

This term owes its use here to German and French philosophy, with as its original and basic meaning: 'the key to a cryptogram'. The German philosopher, Karl Jaspers, used it in this sense to express the manner in which the transcendent may be to some extent directly apprehensible *within* metaphysical experience, which itself, however, cannot be objectivized: what becomes visible in it cannot be more closely defined; we can only 'point' to it in evocative language. In connection with this (but then in a more or lessadverse sense) 'cipher' can be used as a *blank* cipher, a kind of blank sheet which anyone can fill in as he pleases: an unknown X, the content of which one can determine for oneself on the basis of one's own wishes and desires without definitive influence from the thing to be named. 'Cipher' (chiffre) then is associated with *pure* projection.

Deutero-Isaianic; Trito-Isaianic

In contrast to the older parts of the Old Testament book, Isaiah, which commemorate and reflect (Isa. 1-39) the prophetic activity of the prophet Isaiah (*c.* 765-700 BC), the chapters Isa. 40 up to and including 55 are most likely by an unknown prophet from the end of the Exile (the 'second' or Deutero-Isaiah), and the chapters Isa. 56 to 66a prophetic collection which at any rate in

substance comes from the period after the Exile (the 'third' or Trito-Isaiah).

Deuteronomistic

Deuteronomic means: relating to the book of Deuteronomy, the last of the so-called five books of Moses (the Pentateuch). By contrast, 'Deuteronomistic' denotes the particular spirituality of these parts of the tradition which are to be found not only in the book of Deuteronomy but also in the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings (as opposed to the Yahwistic, Elohistic and Priestly traditions) and which have also influenced many pieces of tradition in later Jewish literature. The end of the northern kingdom, and particularly that of the southern kingdom (587), marks the beginning of the Deuteronomistic view of history. God cherishes his people; but if they are unfaithful to him, the curse of which Deuteronomy speaks will be visited on them. This tradition was handed down by Levites from the countryside of the northern kingdom, who after the fall of that kingdom came to Jerusalem (with their 'collections') and lived there in a state of conflict with the Jerusalem priests; there, however, they became the theological force, the inspiration of which found its expression in the
[742] Deuteronomistic tradition: 'Deuteronomistic' refers to the second edition of the book of Deuteronomy (in the period of Josiah's reform). In it the Deuteronomistic conception of history is completed by insights into the Babylonian exile and the ideas of wisdom. The → Chasidicmovement especially was inspired by this Deuteronomistic view of history.

Disclosure and disclosure experience

The language of faith (or talking in religiousterms) is grounded in an experience of a special sort. That contains an empirical basis: the things we experience are accessible to all, but in them some people experience (whether suddenly or gradually) a deeper dimension which in itself is not to be objectivized and yet really does disclose itself through this empirical (or historical) datum of experience: there is more to the phenomenon, or more within it, than what constitutes public experience or is simply empirical or just flatly descriptive. Someone's friendly glance can suddenly open up for us a whole new world. That is a 'disclosure' which is not purely subjective. Thus in registrable facts a deeper reality unfolds, through which the person who undergoes this disclosure experience at the same time comes to himself. That is why a 'disclosure' experience is not an objectivizing perception even though it springs from an objective appeal; furthermore, it has a catalysing effect, whereby the 'disclosure' claims the whole person undergoing it (self-disclosure). What is revealed in this way cannot be pinpointed in objectivizing language, but can only be verbalized in some evocative fashion; for that reason we employ not *descriptive* language but an evocative 'language of faith' so as in

some measure to render the substance and meaning of the experience open and comprehensible to others, as an invitation to share the same experience. This is not to deny that there may also be false, illusory disclosure experiences.

Epiphany (epiphaneia); epiphanous

In this book 'epiphany' - being made public - is always used for God's becoming visible ('epiphanous' or transparent) in the man Jesus: in his acts (e.g., his miracles), in his death, in the life of the Christian community, in what we call 'Jesus' appearances', etc. 'Epiphany' points to the visible presence, here and now, of God in the activity and ministry of the man Jesus. 'Epiphany christology' speaks in 'revelational terms' about the salvation imparted by God and manifestin Jesus.

Eschatological

According to the Dutch `Van Dale' dictionary: 'doctrine concerning the last things', that is: 'everything taught about the lot of human beings after death'. This definition is certainly basic but, theologically speaking, inadequate. *Eschata* means 'last things', extremities'; everything that has to do with the ultimate, deepest but therefore final meaning of human life is called 'eschatological'; therefore not just the `*post-mundane'*but also whatever concerns the *definitive* meaning of life as well as the 'last days', the end of the [743]
age – and indeed as the time of salvation (leaving open the question of whether this is 'the end of history' or an extensive, historically unlimited time of salvation). Each time the context must provide the intended nuance, although the emphasis always lies on the aspect of 'what is definitely decisive', what will become publicly evident only 'in the end' and after death, but which is already at stake in the present and is being decided in it.

Etiological story

'Etiological' comes from Greek discourse (logos) regarding the *aitia* (cause, ground) of things. 'Ground', like *arché,* has to do with 'beginning' (= principle) as well as with 'beginning' (= start), especially on the ancient (classical) presupposition that the inception ('in the beginning') reveals as it were the *essential being* of things; in each case, therefore, 'a beginning' operates as a model for *universal* experiences of humanity. Thus an 'etiological story' is not meant to provide a reconstruction of facts or events in their historically precise order of occurrence in the past; its purpose is rather to afford an insight into the nature and internal structure of particular experiences in the present.

***Experiential (and intellective) horizon*

Just as in everyday language we speak of a 'horizon' beyond which we cannot see anything, but within which we become aware of visible things, so we speak - in what is admittedly a figurative and yet very real sort of language - about a horizon *within which* we *experience* and, by interpreting, *understand* things (persons, affairs, events) – and in such a way that we are unable to look over and beyond this horizon, can experience and understand nothing outside it. In fact this experiential and intellective horizon embraces the whole historical course of events within which we stand and which has made us what we are as creatures nonetheless orientated towards the future. Our horizon of experience is therefore historical and social. But (according to a certain philosophical and, more especially, Christian insight) it is backed by a more profound (ontological) experiential horizon whichspans the dimension of time (present, past and future). Thanks to this depth-element, our experiential horizon is not 'closed' but 'open', ultimately open to the point of the mystery of God; nothing of what we call reality falls completely outside it. In our day-to-day experiences and in our ordinary thinking, the historical and social (even ontological) horizon of our experience goes unnoticed, but at an unconscious level it certainly comes into play, colouring all our judgements and utterances. Even this horizon, however, may to a certain albeit limited extent be thematized (also hermeneutically)to a certain albeit limited extent. (For a more detailed specification see Part Four of this book, pp. 576-8.)

Formgeschichte

This term (literally: Form-history) is used for a method used inparticular by
[744] German exegetes. It starts from the postulate (which by now can fairly be called a scientific fact) that the gospels are formed out of small, already existing but separate units (like the pericopes in our gospels): an account of a miracle, of a saying of Jesus and so forth. These have already - at a pre-canonical stage - been combined according to certain genres, listed as *logia*or sayings of Jesus, stories, miracles, paradigms, etc. An important point here is that the gospels, in assembling and passingon these traditions, do so with a particular interest in view - that of confessing the Christ (thus representing from within the interest of the church). First of all, therefore, the gospels are expressions of the church's faith in Jesus, confessed as the Christ. The older practitioners of this *Formgeschichte* method argued one-sidedly that the church itself was the groundout of which these pericopes directly grew (that is, they have their *Sitzim Leben* in catechetic, liturgical, apologetic and other needs of the church); thus they are creations of the church. This one-sidedness quite rightly came up against a lot of opposition, because the result was to reduce the bond connecting Christian belief *(kerygma)* with the historical reality of Jesus of

Nazareth to a very thin thread; thus the historical grounding of the Christian faith in Jesus of Nazareth became problematical. That is why the more recent exponents of *Formgeschichte* (without denying the *Sitz im Leben* of the pericopes-tradition within the church), have given more emphasis to the fact that within this updating and accommodation on the church's part the (ancient-)historical concern with the earthly Jesus is clearly operative and that on the basis of linguistic signals in the text itself, it is possible to point to the evangelists' awareness of the distance between 'memories of Jesus' and 'updating' or contemporary adaptation by the church. With the aid of *Formgeschichte* our aim is, among other things, to penetrate to the earliest layer of the pre-canonical tradition, in order thus to open the way to Jesus of Nazareth. Because the exponents of *Formgeschichte* often draw from it conclusions as to the chronology of diverse traditions, where these are often confronted with serious objections, Anglo-Saxon scholars in particular prefer to speak of 'Form-criticism' rather than of 'Form-history'. See also: *Redaktionsgeschichte* and *Traditionsgeschichte.*

Gnosis (gnostic and gnosticism)

Gnosis (Greek) means knowledge. Gnosis or gnosticism in the second century AD was a philosophical and religious movement of an eclectic kind, but within a clearly religious and philosophical approach to life. The basic idea of gnosticism is that man has within him, namely in his soul, a divine spark which has descended into matter and on being released must rise again to its divine origin. This redemption or ascent takes place through a messenger (having the semblance of a human being), who communicates divine knowledge. Consequently knowledge is assigned a central place as the means of redemption - knowledge in the form of a special revelatory knowledge, which is communicated through tradition and initiation. Knowledge is salvation. When I say in this book that Christianity is not gnosis, I mean that Christian belief should not be reduced to a doctrine or merely to orthodoxy. As gnosis arose from a general trend towards inwardness and ascetic religion, towards a flight from the world, one can also properly speak of a pre-gnosis. This pre-gnosis is not something which is to be found purely within Judaism or Christianity nor yet purely within an oriental version of Christianity; it is a general phenomenon typical of late antiquity, in which the whole culture was involved. There is endless discussion about whether gnostic ideas are or are not to be found in the New Testament, above all because there is a connection between the early Jewish or Judaic wisdom literature and later gnosticism, gnosticism proper. ('Early Jewish', here as elsewhere, means 'before AD 70'.) It depends whether one derives gnosticism from Judaism, or sees it as an oriental syncretism or a Hellenistic philosophy of life, or as a heretical movement

within Christianity in the second century. At present historians are more and more inclined to talk about a universal 'gnostic proclivity' (pre-gnosis) in culture at the time of the rise of Christianity. French and Anglo-Saxon writers therefore distinguish between gnosis and gnosticism, but describe both as gnostic. Others speak of pre-gnosis and gnosis, insisting that the former should not be understood too much in the light of the latter, which brings up to date earlier material in terms of second-century gnosticism. Many ideas from apocalyptic and Platonism recur in gnosticism, in which they then, and only then, acquire their really gnostic significance. Concepts in themselves (e.g. plerōma) do not as such tell us anything about what their possible 'gnostic' significance might be.

[745] *Hermeneutics (hermeneusis, hermeneutic)*

Hermeneusis is 'explanation'; hermeneutics is 'the science of explanation', which examines the prior factors necessary to achieving a hermeneusis or explanation (for instance, understanding of the Bible). This study is necessary because of the ever-growing experiential and intellective horizon of our experiences, our thinking and our ways of verbally expressing these. See also: Updating.

Homology

This means: credal affirmation, confession of faith; *homologein,* `to confess'(faith), is not materially to be differentiatedfrom *pistis,* faith. We confess with the lips, we believe with the heart (Rom. 10:9f.). A homology or affirmation of faith occurs eityher in the form of an acclamation (Jesus the Lord!) or in that of a confessional declaration of faith, centred upon God's action in Jesus (e.g. 2 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 4:14).

Hypostasis (hypostasizing; an-hypostasis and en-hypostasis)

Hypostasis is the Greek word for 'that which supports and props up' or, in a figurative sense, for 'something substantial' (substantial nourishment; a substantial reading). Ina philosophical usage it acquired the meaning of a 'person' as a complete, independent, self-subsistent existence.
'To hypostasize' therefore is to ascribe or confer independent or substantive existence, in this sense: that of a merely functional characterization of something or somebody we make what is an entity in itself.

In addition, in christology we speak of *an-hypostasis* and *en-hypostasis.* An-hypostasis *(an* = 'non-', or 'not') indicates a condition in which 'being-a-human-person' is absent; the intention is that Jesus does indeed have a human nature and (in that sense) is a human being, but that his being-as-person is

constituted by the divine person, with the result that Christ is not a human person. This at any rate suggests that Christ is not a human being 'complete and unabridged'.
En-hypostasis *(en* = 'in') signifies (on the presumption of *an*-hypostasis) that the human non-personal nature is nevertheless personalized by the divine person. In that case the an-hypostasis is the consequence of the en-hypostasis in the divine Word. In current christology an attempt is made (in diverse ways) to explain the en-hypostasis without an-hypostasis; that is, Jesus suffers no deprivation of human *personal* being and yet is one with the Son of God.

Interpretation, matter for (= interpretandum), and interpretative element [746]

An `interpretandum' is 'what has to be interpreted' – thus, what is only rendered intelligible in an interpretation. This latter (the interpretation) may also be described as an'interpretative element'. But sometimes the term 'interpretative element' is used in the sense of 'a mere element of interpretation'; then it signifies not an interpretation (e.g., faith in the resurrection) of one and the same interpretandum envisaged by all (e.g., the reality of Jesus' resurrection), but of a quite different interpretandum (e.g., Jesus' earthly life and death). In the one case belief in the resurrection is the interpretative understanding of an in itself inaccessible, post-Easter real event; in the latter case, on the other hand, it is an interpretative understanding of the pre-Easter event of Jesus' life and death.

Kerygma (kerygmatic)

Kerygma literally means the message which a herald proclaims at the top of his voice. A `kerygmatic' utteranceabout Jesus of Nazareth is a christological statement in which Jesus is confessed and proclaimed as the one in whom salvation, final good of a decisive and finalkind, is experienced. The word *kerygma* (see also: *Formgeschichte)* has acquired favourable or unfavourableconnotations in theology, depending on whether people thought that this confession of Christ *(kerygma)* by the church was or was not grounded in the reality of the earthly Jesus. My own view is that the Christ-*kerygma* is an interpretation in faith, confessed and proclaimed (by the community of faith) of what actually did occur in the earthly Jesus (his person, his message and mode of life), while a *kerygma* of whatever kindwhich could not be filled out in terms of the earthly Jesus would have to be called an ideology or a mystificationor, if it comes to that, a theologoumenon. In this context '*kerygma* theologians' are so called because their point of departure is the church's credal affirmation of Christ, so that they either deny the theological significance of the earthly Jesus or minimize it.

[747] *Kyrial*

Adjective from *Kyrios,* the Lord; literally thus: 'Lord-ly'; it refers to Jesus' 'being the Lord', to his exaltation and saving power.

Linguistic signals

This is a term from semiotic, structural textual analysis. It means that, embedded within the text itself, there are indicators and signals, signposts, telling the reader how the text requires to be understood. They make it clear to us that we are to understand a given text as, for example, poetic and non-historical, or as a novel, a didactic exercise in moralizing, a historical narrative or a religious interpretation of human experiences, and so forth.

Metanoia

This means repentance and conversion in the sense of making a right-aboutturn. In a context of faith in God it entails radical self-criticism. *Metanoia* is the consequence and implication of the coming of God's kingdom.

Ontological

This is 'discourse or speech about' *(logos)* what something - a person, matter, event - is according to its proper and real being *(on, ontos).* In this book the (otherwiseexceptional) use of this word is applied in the sense of:expressing something about the actuality with which I am presented, in accordance with its real nature or being, not constituted by me and yet effectively limiting me.

Orthopraxis

Literally 'right action'. In this book orthopraxis always means action or conduct consonant with the standard or 'directives' of the kingdom of God (the criteria and directives of which are examined in this book).

Paradigm

From the Greek *para-* and *deigma:* that is, a (prior) example as opposed to a reproduction or copy; something exemplary, therefore. The word acquired a special meaning particularly in Greek philosophy: the terrestrial is only a reflection of the true reality, present in the heavenly spheres; and so the latter is the 'paradigm', primal image, norm and criterion in accordance with which our earthly life should be formed. When Jesus is called the paradigm of true humanity, this means that Jesus has lived out in advance, before us, what we have to realize, in creative fidelity and in circumstances different from those he himself knew. In that, therefore, he is our norm, criterion, orientation and inspiration. It does not, however, imply that the complete significance of Jesus

for us is exhausted by his paradigmatic nature.

Paraenesis (paraenetic) [748]

From the Greek *parainesis*.It is an exegetical concept, used to denote that literary genre of biblicalpericopes which includes admonitions, encouragement, comfort, or the call to a certain kind of conduct meeting the demands of God's lordship. Thus paraenesis has to do with ethical guidelines, which in the New Testament articulate what at that time were the contemporary consequences of faith in Christ for human behaviour. It is common in paraenesis for an already existing ethic - not itself biblical but applicable in a biblical setting - to be adopted and integrated *in Christo.* Therefore, such norms are not per se always valid.

Performative speech

This is a term from linguistic analysis. Its function is to make the point that language is not always *descriptive* speech. There arestatements which in no sense describe anything, but for instance are meant to excite emotions, prescribe a rule of behaviour or influence a person's conduct. This is known as performative speech. One illustrative example of it would be the promises madeat a marriage ceremony: they are statements that *effect* what they*signify.* Promises, the sacramental word, statements like 'I hereby declare the meeting open', are forms of 'performative'speech. This still very general theory has subsequently taken on all sorts of (necessary) distinctions regarding the 'truth value' of the performative speech - a matter of morenuanceddistinction than was envisaged at first.

Pre-existence and pro-existence

From early times 'pre-existence' (from: *prae-existentia)* has been the technical term in classical christology for affirming 'the being from eternity' of Christ as the Son of God: with regard to his being-as-God Christ already existed, prior to his conception and birth, asSon of God. The Second Person of the Trinity became a human being in time (incarnational christology).
'Pro-existence' on the other hand is a modern neologism, derived primarily from phenomenology. It means 'existing for the other', being-human-for-the-other. It might be renderedas 'shared humanity', being open and ready to serve one's fellow men.

Prolegomenon

From the Greek *pro-legein* (to say something beforehand). A prolegomenon is what has to be said before getting down to the real subject: introductory

considerations. My ultimate aim is to write a soteriology, that is, to consider what 'Christian redemption' really means, especially in relation to the modern emancipatory liberation movements and to other forms of achieving human health and wholeness; this whole book could be regarded as a prolegomenon thereto. In a wider sense (quite apart from any further intentions) I call this finished book a prolegomenon because what it deals with is not what is usually described as the whole of christology, but just with its foundations.

[749] *Redaktionsgeschichte*

This exegetical method in fact represents a more recent branch of→ *Formgeschichte.* It sets out, by sorting and separating 'tradition' and 'redaction' (with the help of *Formgeschichte*), to track down what was the total conceptionof each redactor (evangelist). After all, the evangelists are not just compilers, bringing together transmitted material and editing it into a single whole; on the contrary, they are also creative authors, each with their own very specific theological vision, *into which* they integrate the pericopes, or collections of pericopes, which they have inherited. Through this editorial process the older traditions acquire new perspectives. The theological vision of the evangelist is related (sometimes critically) to the theology of the Christian community, the local church to which he belonged. This method of *Redaktionsgeschichte* gives us a better insight into the distinctive characteristics of thechristologies of, respectively, Mark, Matthew, Luke and John.

Sapiential

Literally: 'concerning wisdom'. In this book the term is used of the Jewish wisdom literature, which went through a long course of 'pre-history' and is associated mostly with the name of Solomon. This folk wisdom and 'art of living' as found in Israel (not without an affinity with ancient Eastern, more especially Egyptian and Mesopotamian wisdom) later on came in contact with Greek popular wisdom (primarily in Alexandria, where a great many Jews of the Diaspora lived).Even before Jesus' time this latter had become connectedwith Israel's prophetic traditions, so that we can fairlyspeak of a late Judaistic, prophetic-sapiential tradition. This in turn coalesces with apocalyptic. The late Judaistic, sapiential tradition, albeit in a Hellenistic atmosphere, often gave a truer reflection of Israel's Yahwistic piety than the established mode of religion at Jerusalem in the time of Jesus.

Semiotics (and structural textual analysis)

'Semiotics' is a specific new branch among the methods used in the systematic study of literature. It is used primarily for the task of elucidating 'mythical stories' and the New Testament narrative. It has links on the one hand with the

broader, anthropological structuralism of Cl. Lévi-Strauss, and on the other, with the reviving interest in 'story-telling cultures' and'narrative history'.

Semiotics is a discipline still in process of formation, for the most part at the stage of hypothesis, without any obvious cohesion (there aredivergent 'semiotics'), and still searching for a theory of its own. Its champions even hold that the fact of a non-uniform semiotics is in some sense necessary to the 'semiotics of the story'. *Sèmeion* is a 'sign'; so we can describe semiotics as a 'theory of signs', but in a very special sense; it is something like a 'psychoanalysis' of texts, in thissense that it refuses to take the superficial, immediately obvious signification of a text as its real or original meaning. [750] Despite being in a formative stage, the semiotics of the biblical record (especially in France) already has considerable results to its credit, so that the exegete cannot simply ignore it. Semiotics starts from the text as a 'whole' laid concretely before us; its method is, wherever possible, immanent and 'synchronous', confined to the one text, without any 'diachronous' or historical concern, at least not at first, and so with no interest in the prehistory of a text (which was the fundamental interest of *Formgeschichte).* Semiotics works fromthe principle that before all other possible, and perhaps still valid, ways of assessing the biblical text, we should first examine the elements within the text ('within the text' means primarily 'intra-textual', that is, within for instancethe Markan gospel taken as a whole, and then 'extra-textual' would mean 'between a number of texts', for example, comparing Mark's with Matthew's; orcomparing the New Testament with the apocryphal literature). The semiotic model concentrates on the semantic level (that is, the substance or content of the story) and its narrative structure (the formal structuring ofthat content in the story). That is the reason for talking about 'structural analysis' (and why semiotics is a particular form of what is known more broadly as 'structuralism'). The narrative structure is inspected for 'guiding rules', codes enabling us to 'de-code' the text. One of the basic principles of this semiotics is that one must not reduce the text to the level of the 'significatum', that is, the reality - whether economic, historical or even kerygmatic etc. - which is supposed to underlie it. The purpose of semiotics is not to discover something beneath or behind the texts, but to grasp the meaning or point of the texts themselves: their 'sense'. In the structural analysis of the 'semiotics of the story', 'sense' comprises all types of correlation inside and outside *this* text; thus every feature in a story which refers to another element in the story is sense-disclosing (semiotics as actually practised does not concern itself with the *niveau des signifiés* - what is signified - but with the *niveaudes signifiants* - that which does the signifying). Therefore one cannot discover the sense by looking up the meaning of the word employed in a dictionary, but rather by tracing the correlations in which it functions within the story. Essential to this

is the so-called 'anagogic code', that is to say: the text, and nothing else, must itselfyield up its sense, and in this process the oppositions - in particular 'semantic axes', such as high-low, light-darkness, death-life, heavy-light, father-son, etc. - have a very pronounced function. So the analysis starts with a certain, rather arbitrary delimitation of a 'narrative-unit' (isotopy, e.g., the Passion story) and then proceeds to analyzeit by dissecting its narrative structure. Here deduction plays a major role, on the basis of what is called the 'narrational competence' of mankind.A general model of this human capacity to tell stories is distilled from a large number of texts of story-telling. On that basis some semiologists at any rate distinguish principally four elements in a story: the poetic, the emotive, the conative and the referential. In fact, however, most semiologists analyse mainly the poetic elements (and indeed in so doing arrive at some suggestive insights) and beyond that they totally neglect the referential elements. For it can't be denied that *linguistic signals* are to be found in the biblical narrative (thus within the text *qua* text) with an undoubtedly referential code - one, that is, pointing beyond the text - (which therefore calls for a hermeneutical and not just a structural understanding of the story). Thus the structural and deductive understanding of the Bible leads to a 'transformation' of the biblical text (that is, something that has already been said or recounted one says for oneself yet again); for semiotics knows no 'original' story; each story is *ipso facto* a 'translation' (transformation; *L'objet n'est pas décrit par la lecture mais se ré-écrit grâce à elle'*,C. Cabrol, a celebrated French semiologist.) My view is that we are justified in saying that a 'semiotic analysis' of the text has to precede other ways of elucidating or understandinga biblical text via *Formgeschichte, Redaktionsgeschichte* and, finally, hermeneutical methods.

[751] *Soteriology*

The Greek word*Sôtèria* means salvation (wellbeing) or redemption (release). Soteriology is the doctrine of redemption: the view we take of men's salvation, redemption or liberation.

Synoptists (and synoptic)

Means: 'to be read together'. The three evangelists - Mark, Matthew and Luke - should so to speakbe 'read together' and compared with each other, because each in his own way presents what is largely the same transmitted material about Jesus (see in this book: the Q tradition). Although the situation in regard to the Johannine gospel is somewhat different, so that it is set over against the synoptic gospels, there is now a slight tendency to transcend the concept 'synoptic gospels'and to include the Gospel of John as well (in a very unique way, it is true). In this book we use 'synoptic' in the classical sense (of the first

three gospels).

Thematizing

Making something explicit which is really or usually implicit or tacitly accepted in our experience. In other words, uncovering it, reflecting on it, and explicitly discussing it; making it the subject or *theme* of research and formulating it theoretically. That is called 'thematizing'. (Originally the term came from the 'phenomenological' method of Heidegger and more especially of Husserl.)

Theologoumenon

In broad terms a'theologoumenon' means an interpretation having (only) atheological value. But this unfamiliar word is only used when it is meant to imply that atheological interpretation (a) is to be distinguished from acommonly recognized interpretation, which is normative for faith, and (b) is also distinguishable from a historically verifiable affirmation. Thus the locating of Jesus' birth 'in Bethlehem' is not on the one hand an article of faith, nor on the other a historically verifiable fact. It was not historical memories but theological exegesis of Old Testament texts (with an originally quite different drift) that gave occasion for speaking of 'Bethlehem' in connection with Jesus' birth. Whether Jesus was born in Bethlehem or in Nazareth does not affect the Christian faith; it is a 'theologoumenon'. In atheologoumenon, however, a specific article of faith is often thematized.

Topical, 'topica', topos

Rhetoric speaks of 'topica' or topic, that is, 'the skill of finding and ordering data for an oration or disquisition of a generally contemplative nature; the teaching of commonplaces or topoi' (Van Dale dictionary). In this book 'topos' or 'topica' is used in the sense of 'commonplace', a'model', in which specific characteristics continually recur.

Traditionsgeschichte [752]

This term refers to the historical investigation of particular units of tradition, an enquiry which likewise presupposes *Formgeschichte* and *Redaktionsgeschichte.* The Old Testament is not a monolithic block; all kinds of 'spiritual strands' are present in it, as for instance the priestly-levitical, the earlier and later sapiential tradition, the apocalyptical, Chasidic, Deuteronomistic etc. Very specific milieux are often the vehicles of units of tradition with adefinite specific orientation (though in the long run there is contamination of all these originally independent traditions). Researching the tradion-historical

background of biblical concepts like 'messenger', 'wisdom', 'Christ', 'Lord', 'Son', etc. (synchronously as well asdiachronously, that is, within a singlegospel as well as within the entire New Testament and pre-canonical [pre]history and its Old Testament roots) is known as *Traditionsgeschichte*. Placing abiblical concept correctly within the precise unit of traditionto which it belongs helps to define more accurately the meaning of these biblical concepts and to distinguish it from other meanings which asimilar concept has in other units of tradition (with which nevertheless it has often been amalgamated later on), for that is how we can determine the intention peculiar to atradition, the motive for passing on a given tradition. *Traditionsgeschichte* is also important for the process by which the New Testament itself came into being: it seeks to determine whether a *logion* of Jesus has been transmitted in the context of the liturgy (e.g., in the 'Last Supper' tradition) or incatechesis or paraenesis, in the miracle tradition, etc. Being integrated into a specific unitof tradition also influences the meaning-content of abiblicalconcept. Actually, in this book, we have placed a high value on finding and tracing the tradition-historical background of Jewish models and key terms which are relevant to christology – even though doubts about the results of such research often continue due to the inextricable fusion of so many initially very clear-cut units of tradition.

Updating (i.e. contemporary application)

This is a term in hermeneutics: a particular (e.g., biblical) way of speaking, formulated within a Jewish, Greek or ancient experiential horizon, is articulated in a new way within our altered, contemporary experience of life and the world - 'updated' - so that what was formerly intended to be its meaning may also be understandable today. Updating (the task of bringing up to date) amounts therefore to interpretation; but because the old statement is itself already an interpretation, we might also speak of 're-interpretation' or 'modernizing interpretation'. Updating shows us what the past has to say to us now. On the other hand 'updating' can also and just as well mean putting the gospel message into operation in the present day, having regard for completely new experiences which, as such, are foreign to the Bible. What such updating demands therefore is an interpretation which is *true to Jesus*and still *creative*.

[753] *Zealots and sicarii or 'brigands'*

Older even than the party of the Pharisees and Essenes, there was in ancient Israel a *tradition* of Zealots - more especially in priestly circles. Like Yahweh, 'the jealous God' (Ex. 20:5;34:14), these Zealots themselves were also jealous, jealous for Israel, Yahweh's exclusive possession; every occupation of their land by foreign powers was an 'abomination to Yahweh', and so they were

passionately bent on Israel's liberation and were even ready to resort to armed resistance. For this reason the religious motive had at the same time essentially political implications. An example of this (conducive to emulation) was Phinehas, son of the priest Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest (fragment of priestly tradition in Num. 25:10-11; Num. 31:6-54). Again during the Maccabean revolt, Mattathias repeatedly calls himself or other combatants 'zealousfor God and the Law': 'zealots' (see 1 Macc. 2:23-68; 2 Macc. 4:2). The Book of Wisdom describes this spiritual fervour thus: "The Lord will take his zeal *(guana; zelus)* as his whole armour, and will arm all creation to repel his enemies" (Wis. 5:17). At the time of the Jewish War (AD 66-70/73) there is reference (on the part of the historian Josephus) to 'Zealots', led, among others, by a man who gave himself a new second name, Phinehas - an obvious allusion to the spiritual dedication of the old priestly resistance fighter. Zealots in the New Testament period, therefore, are likely to be found among the Temple priests, who, on the one hand, came to be opposed to Rome because of the 'defilement of the Temple' and, on the other, to the late-Zadokitic Jewish high priests in Jerusalem who contravened the Law and collaborated with the Romans: they 'were zealous' during that Jewish rebellion for the sanctity of the Temple and the priesthood, in rebellion against the Romans. Distinct from these priest-Zealots there were also all kinds of groups which Josephus calls 'brigands' or, using a Roman term, *sicarii* (dagger-wearers). However, Josephus fails to see clearly enough that the *sicarii* too were not simply bands of plundering robbers (which certainly did exist in the wilderness) but (non-priestly) resistance fighters with - like the Zealots - the same sort of religious 'zeal for Yahweh' and against the Romans (perhaps, especially in Galilee, with social motives as well). Then too there flourished in these groups a strongly messianic expectation (a real Jew will once more become king in Yahweh's name); some of these 'gang-leaders' presented themselves as messianic claimants (and were crucified as resistance fighters; others were killed in the course of battle). During the Jewish War these resistance fighters seem to have aligned themselves with the priestly Zealots, so that they were often working together; but various conflicts led to cross-sections being divided, so that in the heat of the struggle the clear distinction between Zealots and *sicarii* was to some extent obscured. Both groups were driven by a similar archaic ideology; but they did not really form a single movement. Both Judas the Galilean, who in AD 6 rejected and refused to pay the Roman tax imposed by Quirinius and set out to stop this 'abomination to Yahweh' by way of subversive activities, and also the resistance fighters of, for example, Massada during the Jewish War, are called 'brigands' and *sicarii* by Josephus. The fact that according to the evangelists Jesus was crucified 'between two thieves' is most probably an intimationthat these were no ordinary bandits, but rather two resistance

fighters (also in view of the historically doubtful story of the resistance fighter 'Jesus Barabbas', who is supposed to have been released).

[754] B. ABBREVIATIONS

Here follow abbreviations for works repeatedly cited (throughout all the sections of the book). Other abbreviated *titles* in the *Notes* refer - by means of the significant word in each title - to works mentioned within the same section, at the head of it (beginning of the section, chapter or paragraph) in the text itself, or else works which have been cited in full in a note within the three immediately preceding pages.

Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung* = Kl. Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu. Ihr historischer Hintergrund im Judentum und im Alten Testament,* vol. I, *Markus und Parallelen* (WMANT, 40), Neukirchen-Vluyn l972.

Berger, *Amen-Worte* = Kl. Berger, *Die Amen-Worte Jesu. Eine Versuchung zum Problem der legitimation in apokalyptischer Rede* (BZNW, 39), Berlin 1970.

Bultmann, *Tradition* = R. Bultmann, Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition (FRLANT, N.F. l2), Göttingen l9708 (with supplement).

[755] Bultmann, Theologie = R. Bultmann, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Tübingen l9655 (I quote from l9583)

Conzelmann, Grundriss = H. Conzelmann, Grundriss der Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Munich l9682.

Christ, Faith, History = Christ, Faith and History (ed. by S. Sykes and J. P. Clayton), Cambridge Studies in Christology, Cambridge l972.

Cullmann, Christologie = O. Cullmann, Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments, Tubingen l9653.

Hahn, Hoheitstitel = F. Hahn, Christologische Hoheitstitel. Ihre Geschichte im frühen Christentum (FRLANT, 83), Göttingen l963.

Hoffmann, Q-Studien = P. Hoffmann, Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle (Neut. Abh., N.F. 8), Münster l972.

Van Iersel, *Der Sohn* = B. van Iersel, 'Der Sohn' in den synoptischenJesusworten, Leiden l96l.

Käsemann, Besinnungen = E. Käsemann, Exegetische Versuche und

Besinnungen, 2 vols, Göttingen l9654 (l960) (collected articles).

Lührmann, Q-Redaktion = D. Lührmann, Die Redaktion der Logienquelle (WMANT, 33), Neukirchen-Vluyn l969.

Robinson-Koester, Trajectories = J. M. Robinson and H. Koester, Trajectories through early Christianity, Philadelphia l97l.

Roloff, Das Kerygma = J. Roloff, Das Kerygma und der irdische Jesus, Göttingen l970.

Schulz, Q-Quelle = Schulz,Q. DieSpruch-Quelleder Evangelisten, Zürich l972.

Steck, Gewaltsames Geschick = O. H. Steck, Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten (WMANT, 23), Neukirchen-Vluyn l967.

Strack-Billerbeck = P. Billerbeck and H. L. Strack, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, 4 vols and two supplementary parts(ed. J. Jeremias with K.Adolph), Munich I-IV, l965; V, l956; VI, l96l.

Tödt, Der Menschensohn = H.-E. Tödt, Der Menschensohn in der synoptischen Ueberlieferung, Gütersloh l9632 (l959).

Vielhauer, Aufsätze = Ph.Vielhauer, Aufsätzezum Neuen Testament (Theologische Bücherei, 3l), Munich l965 (collected articles).

Weeden, Mark-traditions = Th. J. Weeden, The Mark-traditions in Conflict, Philadelphia l97l.

C. PSEUDEPIGRAPHA (or non-canonical, intertestamentary literature) [756]

J. Becker, *Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte der zwölf Patriarchen* (AGSU, 8), Leiden-Cologne l970.

P. Bogaert, *L'Apocalypse syriaque de Baruch I-II* (Sources chrétiennes, l44), Paris 1969.

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M. Hadas, *The Third and Fourth books of Maccabees* (JAL, 12), New York 1953.
E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen,* 2 vols, Tübingen 1964[3].
E. Kautsch (ed.), *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments,* 2 vols, Tübingen 1900 (or Darmstadt 1962).
G. Kish (ed.), Ps.-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum,* Notre-Dame 1949.
K. Kuhn, *Konkordanz zu den Qumran-Texten,* Göttingen 1960.
G. Vermès, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* Harmondsworth 1962.
B. Violet, *Esra-Apokalypse* (GCS, 18/32), 2 vols, Leipzig 1910, 1924.

D. SIGLA EMPLOYED (periodicals, dictionaries, series)

AGSU	=	Archivenzur Geschichtedes Spätjudentums und Urchristentums (Leiden-Cologne)
ASNT	=	Acta Seminariorum Novi Testamenti (of Uppsala) (Lund)
AThANT	=	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Basle-Zürich)
BHTh	=	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie (Tübingen)
Bibl	=	Biblica (Rome)
BLit	=	Bibel und Liturgie (Vienna)
BRes	=	Biblical Research (Chicago)
BuK	=	Bibel und Kirche (Stuttgart)
BuL	=	Bibel und Leben (Düsseldorf)
BZ	=	Bibel Zeitschrift (Freiburg i. Br.)
BZNW	=	Beiheft zur 'Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft', see ZNW
CBQ	=	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly (Washington)
CollBrugGand	=	Collationes Brugenses et Gandavenses (Ghent; Bruges)
Conc	=	Concilium (international theological journal)
DBS	=	Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément (Paris)
EvQ	=	The Evangelical Quarterly (London)
EvTh	=	Evangelische Theologie (Munich)
ETL	=	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses (Louvain; Gembloux)
FRLANT	=	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Göttingen)
GCS	=	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Leipzig)
Gul	=	Geist und Leben (Grass-Würzburg)
HThR	=	The Harvard Theological Review (Cambridge, Mass.)

IKZ	=	Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift (Frankfurt)
Interpretation	=	Interpretation (Richmond, USA)
JAL	=	Jewish Apocryphal Literature (New York)
JBL	=	Journal of Biblical Literature (Boston)
JRel	=	The Journal of Religion (Chicago)
JTS	=	The Journal of Theological Studies (London)
KuD	=	Kerygma und Dogma (Göttingen)
LThK2	=	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (Freiburg i.Br.; 2nd ed.)
Lvie	=	Lumière et Vie (Lyons)
Neut. Abh.	=	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen (Münster)
NovT	=	Novum Testamentum (Leiden)
NovTSuppl	=	Supplements to NovT
NRTh	=	Nouvelle Revue Théologique (Louvain-Tournai)
NTD	=	Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen)
NTS	=	New Testament Studies (Cambridge and Washington)
NZSTh	=	Neue Zeitschriftfürsystematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie (Berlin)
OrSyr	=	L'Orient Syrien (Paris)
PhJ	=	Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft (Fulda)
RAC	=	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum (Stuttgart)
RB	=	Revue Biblique (Paris-Jerusalem)
RechBibl	=	Recherches Bibliques (Bruges)
RGG3	=	Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Tübingen, 3rd ed.)
RHE	=	Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique (Louvain)
RHPR	=	Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuse (Strasbourg)
RMM	=	Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale (Paris)
RQumrân	=	Revue de Qumrân (Paris)
RSPT	=	Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques (Paris)
RSR	=	Recherches de Science Religieuse (Paris)
SBS	=	Stuttgarter Bibel-Studien (Stuttgart)
ScotJTh	=	The Scottish Journal of Theology (Edinburgh)
StdZ	=	Stimmen der Zeit (Freiburg i.Br.)
TCR	=	The Clergy Review
ThGl	=	Theologie und Glaube (Paderborn) [758]
ThLZ	=	Theologische Literaturzeitung (Leipzig)
ThPQ	=	Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift (Linz)

ThPh	=	Theologie und Philosophie (Freiburg i.Br.)
ThQ	=	Theologische Quartalschrift (Tübingen-Stuttgart)
ThR	=	Theologische Rundschau (Tübingen)
ThS	=	Theological Studies (Woodstock)
ThSt	=	Theologische Studien (Utrecht)
ThStKr	=	Theologische Studien und Kritiken (Hamburg)
ThWAT	=	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament (Stuttgart)
ThWNT	=	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart)
ThZ	=	Theologische Zeitschrift (Basle)
TPh	=	Tijdschrift voor Filosofie (Louvain)
TrThZ	=	Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift (Trier)
TvT	=	Tijdschrift voor Theologie (Nijmegen-Louvain)
TU	=	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur (Leipzig-Berlin)
UnSQR	=	Union Seminary Quarterly Review (New York)
VT	=	Vetus Testamentum (Leiden)
VTS	=	Supplements to VT
WMANT	=	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament (Neukirchen-Vluyn)
WUNT	=	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen)
ZAW	=	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin)
ZKTh	=	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie (Innsbruck)
ZNW	=	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche (Giessen)
ZRGG	=	Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte (Marburg)
ZThK	=	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche (Tübingen)
Zygon	=	Zygon. Journal of religion and science (Chicago)

E. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INDEX OF SUBJECTS

The index refers to the old pagenumbers, e.g. [256], of the original publication. Relevant literature is mentioned in the text itself at the start of each section, chapter or paragraph. More detailed literature is also given in the footnotes.

Abba-experience: 256-7
Apocalypticism: 116
Appearances: 329-31; 360-1; 379
Beatitudes: 172, n. 90
Canonicity: 404, n. 2
Cleansing of the Temple: 243, n. 81

Companionship at table (with Jesus) ('tax-collectors and sinners'): 200
Conversion (repentance) movements: 116-17; 131, n. 30
1 Cor. 15:5-5: 350, n. 43
David's son: see Son of David
Death and rejection of Jesus: 272-3 Denial and conversion (of Peter and the disciples): 320
Easter experience: 329-31
Enlightenment Christology (Lessing-question): 583, n. 1
Eschatological prophet: 441
Fasting and non-fasting: 201, n. 21
'Going after' Jesus: see Imitation Gospel (good news): 107
Greek (and Jewish) ideas of God: 560, n. 2
'Historical Jesus' scholarly, critical approach: 62-3
- narrative record: 77, n. 1, n. 2
- criteriaforan'authentically historical Jesus': 88-90
Holy sepulchre: see Sacred tomb
Horizon: see Intellective
Human transcendence (a Christology 'from below'): 595-6
Imitation of (andconversionto)Jesus: 218-19
Intellective and experiential horizon: 577, n. 1, n. 2, n. 3, n. 4, n. 5
Interpretation (interpretative element) and experience: 392, n.18
Jews and Christians: 32, n. 11
John the Baptist: 126
Kingdom of God (lordship): 140-1
Last Supper (Lord's Supper): 214, n. 40; 308, n. 97
Law (Torah): 229-30
Lessing-question: see Enlightenment
Life after death (late Judaism): 518
Lordship: see Kingdom of God
Love (commandment to): 236, n. 74
Maranatha Christology: 405-6
'Mighty acts': see Miracles
Miracles: 179-80
Mission: 219, n. 46
Parables: 154-5
Parousia Christology: see *Maranatha*
Patristic Christology: 560, n.2, n.4, 564, n.1; 567, n.12
Person concept: 662, n.13
Process philosophy: 668, n.20
Proof-texts: see Scriptural
Q tradition and Q source: 100-1
Rapture-theory: 340, n.20
Resurrection (and exaltation): 516-17; 329-31; 360-1; 518, n. 1
Rom. 1:3-4: 504, n.133
Sacred tomb: 329-31
Scriptural proof(-texts): 526, n. 22
Semiotic and structural textual analysis: 362, n.59, 363, n.10
Sicarii: see Zealots
Sinlessness of Jesus: 600, n.11
Son of David: 450; 435, n. 60
Son of Man: 459-60
Suffering righteous one: 394, n.22 ; 471, n.73
Temple cleansing: see Cleansing
Temptations in the wilderness: 413, n. 29
Theios anèr Christology: 424; 425, n.48
Third day: 516
Virgin birth: 554, n.5
Wisdom Christologies: 429
World of Jesus' time: 43
Zealots (and *sicarii):* 454, n.38, 455, n.40; 300, n.88

F. INDEX OF AUTHORS

The index refers to the old pagenumbers, e.g. [404], of the original publication. Only 'contemporary' authors have been listed. When the volume is a *Festschrift* (symposia, etc.), this index includes the authors cited from the volume (but not the name of the author to whom the Festschrift was dedicated, who in most cases has been included on other grounds).

Aland, D. K., 404, n.2
Albertz, M., 329; 353, n.48
Alt, A., 43
Althaus, P., 516
Andermann, Fr., 32, n.11
Aner, K., 583, n.1
Aron, R., 137, n.44
Asch, Sch., 32, n.11
Audet, J. B., 416, n.34; 480, n.82
Auerbach, E., 154
Aulèn, G., 279, n.21

Bacht, H., 569, n.15
Backes, I., 662, n.13
Baelz, H. R., 628, n.1
Baird, J. A., 77, n.2
Bakker, L., 516
Baltazar, E., 668, n.20
Balz, H. R., 405, 459, 516; 289, n.49; 411, n.25; 500, n.119; 539, n.19
Bammel, E., 100; 316, n.107
Bardtke, H., 518, n.1
Barth, K., 48
Barthes, R., 362, n.59, 363, n.60
Bartsch, H. W., 272, 329; 81, n.1 ; 234, n.81; 245, n.87; 350, n.43; 479, n.81; 507, n.133
Basly, D. de, 667
Bauer, W., 524; 94, n 28; 236, n.74; 524, n.12; 560, n.2
Baumann, R., 62
Baumbach, G., 454, n.38
Baumgartner, W., 347, n.39
Baur, F. C, 424,440
Bavel, T. van, 595
Beare, F. W., 219, n.46; 409, n 17
Beau very, R., 256
Becker, J., 126, 140, 441; 126, n.11; 131, n.31, 132, n.33, 35; 134, 36; 147, n.56; 148, n.59; 149, n.66; 411, n 21; 755
Beethoven, L. van, 591
Behm, J., 131, n.31
Benoit, P., 101, 102, 329
Berger, Kl., 107, 218, 229, 394, 405, 429. 441. 450, 458, 494, 503, 507, 510; 32, n.13; 94, n28; 100, n.50; 117, n.4; 149, n.67; 160, n.30; 221, n.55; 224, n.57; 225, n.58; 231, n.69; 233, n.71; 248, n.89; 249, n.91; 150, n.92; 250, n.93,94; 253, n.100; 254, n.102 , 265, n.121; 276, n.8, 9; 277, n.12,13; 278, n.14,15; 279, n.19,20; 280, n.22; 281, n.23; 309, n.101; 373, n.64; 384, n.34; 386, n.5; 394, n.23; 416, n 34; 449, n.27; 456, n.44; 457, no.46; 458, n.52; 487, n.90; 489, n.92,93; 490, n.95; 491, n.96; 493, n.100; 494, n.102,103; 496, n.106-9; 498, n.115,116; 506, n.127,128,130, 131; 507, n.132,134, 135; 510, n.140; 518, n.2; 537, n.13; 593, n.11; 754
Berger, P., 48, n.2
Bergeron, M., 662, n.13
Berkhof, H., 595
Berten, I., 516; 613, n.2

Bertram, G., 321, n.2; 537, n.13
Betz, H. D., 218, 424; 714, n 48
Betz, O., 116
Biehl, P., 88
Bieler, L., 424
Billerbeck,P.(=Strack-Billerbeck), 441; 128, n.20; 149, n.149; 198, n.18; 209, n.27; 214, n.38; 215, n.43; 221, n.51; 237, n.76; 245, n.86; 259, n.108; 203, n.117; 395, n.26; 445, n.14; 500, n.119; 501, n.127; 518, n.1; 528, n.25; 534, n.3; 535, n.4; 754
Biser, E., 154, 273
Black, M., 88, 98, 405; 211, n.35; 407, n. 9, 10
Blank, J., 140, 149, 154, 179, 229, 360, 379. 450, 526; 81, n.1; 118, n.5; 135, n.38, 39; 186, n.4, 7; 332, n.4; 404, n.1; 479, n.81
Blatter, Th., 140
Blinzler, J., 272, 405; 299, n.86; 326, n.19
Bloch, E., 591
Bogaert, P., 755
Boismard, M.-E., 101, 102; 498, n 118
Boman, Th., 62; 71, n.10; 85, n.10; 333, n.5; 423, n.47; 425, n.48; 492, n.97
Bonsirven, J., 43, 116; 445, n.12
Borgen, P., 272
Bornkamm, G., 63, 74, 89; 151, n.75; 236, n.74
Borsch, F. H., 459, 461, 468; 471, n.72
Borsch, H., 554, n 5
Bourgeois, H., 28, n 7
Bowker, J., 312, n.103; 313, n.104; 314, n.105; 314, n 106
Brandon, S., 243, 246; 243, n.81; 454, n.38
Braudel, F., 577, n 1
Braumann, G., 200; 201, n.214
Braun, H., 70, 86, 90, 116, 126, 230, 239, 595; 678, n.28; 90, n.15; 131, n.30; 228, n.64; 328, n.78; 347, n.39; 278, n.15; 524, n.14
Brod, M., 32, n.11
Broer, J., 329
Brown, R. E., 327, n.23; 554, n.5
Brown, Sch., 320
Brownlee, W., 126
Brox, N., 567, n.12
Brunner, P., 140
Buber, M., 32; 32, n.11, 12; 674, n.1
Bultmann, R., 48, 62, 70, 71, 75, 89, 92, 140, 301, 440, 459, 467, 590; 72, n.11; 92, n.20; 131, n.32; 201, n.21; 220, n.48; 321, n.2; 326, n.18; 460, n.56; 469, n.68; 470, n.70; 477, n.78; 501, n.122; 508, n.136; 531, n.36; 754
Burchard, Chr., 360; 236, n.34; 356, n.49; 369, n.63; 374, n.86; 377, n.70, 73
Buren, P. van, 595
Burger, C, 501; 435, n.60; 501, n.123; 503, n.125; 506, n.131; 507, n.133; 511, n.141
Burkitt, F. C, 89, 95; 95, n.31, 33
Buse, I., 126
Bussmann, C, 516
Buytendijk, F. J., 258, n.104

Calvert, D. G., 89; 91, n.16
Campenhausen, H. van, 329; 704, n 44; 349, n.40
Carlston, C. E., 96, n.36
Carlston, J. C. E., 89
Carmichael, J., 32, n.11
Carmignac, J., 455, n.41
Carnley, P., 589, n.6; 589, n.7
Carroll, K., 379
Casey, R., 405
Catchpole, D., 316, n.107
Cazelles, H., 329

Cerfaux, L., 536; 332, n.4; 536, n.8
Chabrol, C, 330; 362, n.59; 752
Charles, R. H., 755
Chaunu, P., 577, n 1
Chenu, M.-D., 568, n.14
Chevallier, M., 450; 443, n.10
Chorin, Sch. ben, 32, n.11
Christ, F., 429
Clayton, J. P., 754
Clemen, C, 755
Cohen, H., 32, n.11
Colin, P., 595
Colpe, C, 459, 461, 468; 150, n.70; 460, n.56; 469, n.64; 531, n.36
Congar, Y., 40; 40, n.15
Conzelmann, H., 89, 92, 99, 140, 272, 320, 330, 360, 379, 405, 450, 459, 467, 470, 516; 92, n.19; 259, n.107; 260, n.110; 285, n.26; 297, n.84; 350, n.43; 374, n.66; 386, n.6; 308, n.8; 462, n.58; 465, n.59-61; 466, n.62; 469, n.63-67; 470, n.70; 754
Coppens, J., 441, 450, 459; 473, n.76
Cranfield, C, 126
Cullmann, O., 89, 92, 379, 405, 441, 450, 459, 477, 516; 92, n.19; 92, n.22; 94, n.27; 290, n.59; 300, n.88; 469, n.64; 472, n.75; 477, n.79; 479, n.81; 518, n.1; 534, n.3; 754

Dahl, N. A., 63, 85, 89, 96, 272; 71, n.10; 86, n.12; 94, n.29; 95, n.30; 96, n.38; 97, n.43
Daniel, C, 454, n.38
Daniélou, J., 126, 405; 560, n.2
Darton, G. C., 126
Dauer, A., 272, 320
Dechent, A., 285, n.26
De Petter, D., 618
Delling, G., 179, 272, 330, 517; 186, n.4; 347, n.39; 511, n.141; 554, n.5
Delobel, J., 200; 207, n.25
Delorme, J., 116, 330, 332-3; 284, n.25; 331, n.2, 3; 332, n.4; 333, n.6; 334, n.8; 335, n.12; 337, n.15; 345, n.35; 347, n.37, 39; 351, n.44-46; 388, n.8; 524, n.14, 15; 536, n.6, 7
Dequeker, L., 375
Derksen, K., 736
Desroche, H., 124, n.9
Dibelius, M., 96, 126, 328; 96, n.40; 131, n.32
Diem, H., 63
Dihle, A., 251, n.97
Dijk, T. van, 362, n.59
Dodd, C. H., 89, 140, 154, 330; 95, n.31; 294, n.75; 296, n.82; 297, .83; 407, n.11; 526, n.22
Donner, H., 175, n.92
Drexler, H., 200
Driver, G. R., 480, n.83
Duling, D., 450
Dupont, J., 379, 526; 161, n.81; 172, n.90; 326, n.19; 332, n.4; 413, n.29; 511, n.141
Dupré, W., 591, n.8; 608, n.16
Duquoc, Chr., 516, 595, 601; 601, n.13
Durand, A., 577, n.2

Ebeling, G., 63, 59
Ebeling, H. J., 201, n.21
Eckert, W. P., 32, n.11
Edwards, R., 405; 411, n.26
Eichholz, E., 154
Eisler, R., 243
Elert, H., 516
Elliott-Binns, L. E., 94, n.28; 423, n.47
Eppstein, V.,243, n.81
Erdin, Fr., 662, n.13
Ernst, J., 405, 469; 435, n.60; 469, n.126; 479, n.80

Fanon, F., 614, n.6
Fascher, E., 330; 524, n.14

Feneberg, R., 200; 214, n.40
Festugière, A., 562, n.4, 5
Feuillet, A., 126, 429; 413, n.29
Fichte, J. G., 664
Fiebig, F., 154
Finegan, L., 321, n.2
Finkel, A., 32, n.11
Fischer, K., 272
Fitzmyer, J., 450
Flemming, J., 756
Flender, H., 140, 510; 507, n.133; 510, n.139; 511, n.141
Flesseman-van Leer, E., 272; 285, n.26; 290, n.56; 526, n.22
Flusser, D., 32, n.11
Foerster, W., 43, 405; 127, n.16
Fohrer, G., 541; 139, n.45; 293, n.69; 541, n.23
Formesyn, R., 179
Fortmann, H. M. M., 608, n.16
Frank, J., 404, n.2
Frankfort, H., 62, n.9
Freedman, H., 530, n.35
Friedrich, G., 424; 297, n.84; 340, n.20; 342, n.30; 518.n.1
Frost, S., 116
Fuchs, E., 63, 89; 526, n.22
Fuller, R., 89, 180, 330, 360, 379, 405; 92, n.19; 347, n.39; 360, n.57; 378, n.75; 388, n.8; 396, n.28; 412, n.28; 421, n.43; 421, n.46; 477, n.79; 539, n.15
Funk, R.W., 154
Furet, F., 577, n.1
Fürst, W., 273

Gagg, R., 501, n.122
Galot, J., 595
Garaudy, R., 27
Gardeil, A., 48
Gebhardt, O. von, 755
Geertz, C, 584, n.8
Geffcken, J., 755
Gelin, A., 172, n.90
Gennip, P. A. van, 603, n.16
George, A., 256, 272, 330; 284, n.25, 340, n.19; 554, n.5
Georgi, G., 425, n.49
Gerhardson, B., 360, 388; 72, n.12; 388, n.9
Geyer, H., 330, 517
Giblet, J., 256, 441; 445, n.15; 446, n.16, 18; 481, n.85; 886, n.88
Gilkey, L., 392, n.18
Gils, F., 230, 379, 441
Gnilka, J., 116, 405; 131, n.31; 136, n.42; 289, n. 53
Goguel, M., 501, n.122
Goldstein, M., 32, n.11
Gollwitzer, H., 600, n.11
Goppelt, L., 360
Göters, J., 273
Grabner-Haider, A., 516
Grant, F. C, 89
Grasz, H., 63, 330, 516; 83, n.7; 321, n.2; 338, n.16; 347, n.39; 350, n.43; 386, n.6
Gräszer, E., 470; 151, n.75; 470, n.69; 472, n.75
Greinacher, N., 595
Grelot, P., 330, 450; 453, n.33; 526, n.22
Greshake, G., 564, n.6; 567, n.12
Grillmeier, A., 569, n.15
Grollenberg, L., 218
Gross, J., 564, n.6
Grossouw, W., 516
Grundmann, W., 89, 256; 326, n.18; 551, n.2
Guignebert, Ch., 43
Gunneweg, A. H., 43
Gusdorf, G., 258, n.104; 259, n.105
Güttgemanns, E., 100, 154; 71, n.10;

84, n.9

Haas, W. S., 62, n.9
Habermas, J., 608, 619; 592, n.9; 608, 17
Hadas, M., 755
Haenchen, E., 405, 441; 501, n.122
Hahn, F., 63, 89,116, 218, 256, 272, 282, 308, 405, 406, 441, 450, 459, 469, 526, 539; 201, n.30; 219, n.46; 220, n.47; 244, n.83; 290, n.59; 292, n.67; 303, n.91; 343, n.31; 350, n.43; 386, n.6; 396, n.28, 29; 406, n.8; 408, n.14; 409, n.17; 411, n.22; 412, n.28; 420, n.40; 421, n.43, 46; 425, n.49; 449, n.27; 458, n.55; 460, n.56; 469, n.64, 68; 487, n.89; 501, n.122; 501, n.124; 503, n.125; 506, n.128, 131; 507, n.133; 511, n.141; 524, n.14; 527, n.26; 537, n.13; 754
Hamerton-Kelly, R. G., 556, n.11b
Hampshire, S., 662
Harsch, H., 90
Hartshorne, Ch., 668, n.20
Hasenfuss, J., 554, n.5
Hasler, V., 100, n.50; 261, n.115
Haubst, R., 567, n.12
Haufe, G., 459; 343, n.31; 534, n.3
Haulotte, E., 659; 659, n.8
Hegel, G.W. F., 613, 665
Heising, A., 200; 214, n.39
Heitmann, A., 564, n.6
Heitsch, E., 63
Hengel, M., 43, 116, 140, 218, 225, 228,320,429, 441, 456; 19, n.3; 94, n.28; 118, n.6; 151, n.71; 219, n.46; 221, n.50, 52; 225, n.60; 227, n.62; 228, n.65; 243, n.81; 261, n.115; 296, n.80; 389, n.14; 409, n.17; 446, n.18; 447, n.20; 454, n.38; 456, n.42; 481, n.85; 500, n.120; 518, n.1; 520, n.7
Hennecke, E., 755
Héring, J., 140; 332, n.4
Hirsch, E., 360
Hoffmann, P., 100, 405; 127, n.16; 131, n.32; 147, n.58; 151, n.71; 172, n.90; 219, n.46; 220, n.47; 265, n.121; 413, n.29, 30; 415, n.32; 469, n.64; 518, n.1; 524, n.11; 524, n.15; 754
Hofius, O., 200
Holtzmann, H., 700, n 2
Hooker, M. D., 459, 468; 471, n.72
Horstmann, M., 272
Hoszfeld, F. L., 175, n.92
Hulsbosch, A., 595, 597; 597, n.1

Iersel, B. van, 89, 107, 200, 211, 256, 260, 330, 331; 96, n.36, 37; 111, n.9; 210, n.31; 211, n.35; 212, n.37; 220, n.48; 222, n.53; 223, n.54; 248, n.90; 260, n.112, 113; 261, n.114; 263, n.117; 265, n.121; 266, n.122; 290, n59; 331, n.2, 3; 350, n.43; 357, n.53; 413, n.29; 415, n.32; 507, n.133; 524, n.11; 754
Isaac, J., 32, n.11
Iwand, H. I., 595

Jäger, W., 562, n.4; 564, n.6
Jaulin, R., 614, n.6
Jeremias, J., 43, 89, 98, 126, 154, 200, 256, 260, 272, 405, 468; 98, n.46; 144, n.53; 607, n.25; 259, n.106, 107; 260, n.112; 261, n.115; 265, n.121; 290, n.59; 329, n.28; 332, n.4; 336, n.13; 350, n.43; 446, n.16; 501, n.122
Jolivet, J., 662, n.13
Jong, W. de, 441
Jülicher, A., 154
Jüngel, E., 230, 272,516, 596; 96, n.42

Kähler, M., 37, 440
Kahmann, J., 218

Kaiser, Ph., 596
Käsemann, E., 63, 71, 89, 90, 92, 126, 140, 180, 405; 92, n.19; 92, n.23; 93, n.25; 98, n.48; 130, n.29; 147, n.55; 211, n.35; 261, n.115; 321, n.2; 350, n.432; 404, n.2; 406, n.7; 754
Kasper, W., 596; 624, n.13
Kasting, H., 320, 360
Kautsch, E., 755
Keck, L. E., 63, 89, 107, 405, 459, 596; 71, n.10; 417, n.37
Kee, A., 201, n.21
Kegel, G., 516; 435, n.58; 524, n.15, 16; 528, n.29; 540, n.22
Kertelge, K., 180, 200; 192, n.13, 14; 210, n.30
Kessler, H., 272; 293, n.70; 302, n.97; 311, n.102
Kierkegaard, S., 70
Kingdom, H. P., 454, n.38
Kisch, G., 755
Klappert, B., 272, 517; 305, n.43
Klausner, J., 32, n.11
Klein, G., 141, 320, 379; 29, n.9; 149, n.61; 321, n.1, 2; 349, n.40
Knörzer, W., 141
Koch, Kl., 116, 441
Koch, R., 450
Koehler, L., 259, n.107
Koehler, L.-Baumgartner, W., 347, n.39
Koester, H., 405, 406, 424, 429; 71, n.10; 85, n.10; 408, n.16; 412, n.28; 425, n.50; 428, n.55; 435, n.58; 754
Kolakowski, L., 608; n.17
Kolb, A., 596
Koselleck, R., 77, n.1
Kottje, E., 71, n.10
Kramer, W., 405, 516; 487, n.89, 170
Kraus, H. J., 285, n.26
Kreck, W., 273
Kremer, J., 330, 516; 338, n.16; 3507, n.43
Kretschmar, G., 662, n.13
Kruyff, T. de, 256
Kuhn, A. W., 425, n.48
Kuhn, G. K., 22, n.5
Kuhn, K., 450, 755
Kuhn, Th. S., 580; 578, n.3
Kuitert, H. M., 596
Kümmel, W., 63, 89,154; 81, n.1; 92, n.19; 151, n.75; 411, n.26
Küng, H., 596
Kabak, A., 32, n.11
Kant, I., 585, 614; 585, n.5

Labriolle, P. de, 560, n.2
Ladd, J. E., 141
Lagrange, M.-J., 43
Lampe, G.W., 516
Lang, K., 595
Lapide, Pinchas E., 32, n.11
Larcher, C, 429
Lash, N., 581, n.5
Laurentin, R., 494, n.104
Lavelle, L., 618, 631; 631, n.2
Le Déaut, R., 445, n.13; 480, n.83; 530, n.34
Lebreton, J., 560, n.2; 566, n.10
Légasse, S., 172, n.90; 265, n.120
Lehmann, K., 526; 350, n.43; 386, n.6; 532, n.37
Lehmann, M., 89; 92, n.19; 93, n.25; 94, n.27; 95, n.30; 96, n.39; 99, n.49
Leibniz, G. W., 583
Leivestad, R., 459, 468; 469, n.63
Lentzen-Deis, Fr., 126, 180; 553, n.4
Léon-Dufour, X., 272, 330, 516; 347, n.39
Lepenies, W., 577, n.1
Lessing, G. E., 67, 583, n.2, 3; 584, n.4; 585
Lévinas, E., 638; 614, n.7; 639, n.1

Liébart, L., 569, n.15
Lietzmann, H., 214; 214, n.40
Limbeck, M., 230
Lindeskog, G., 63
Linnemann, E., 154, 272, 320, 328; 321, n.1; 326, n.16, 19, 20; 327, n.25; 328, n.27; 507, n.133
Lohff, W., 63
Lohfink, G., 333, 360-1, 424, 516; 340, n.20, 341, n.27; 343, n.31; 396, n.29; 536, n.2; 537, n.13
Lohmeyer, E., 43, 126, 214; 128, n.19; 201, n.21; 214, n.40; 321, n.2
Lohse, E., 43, 116, 141, 154-5, 257, 330; 144, n.53; 238, n.77; 293, n.72; 332, n.4; 350, n.43
Loisy, A., 402
Lord, Alb. B., 77, n.1
Lorenzmeier, Th., 600, n.11
Lot-Borodine, M., 567, n.6
Löwith, K., 593, n.10
Luckmann, Th., 48, n.2
Luhmann, N., 592, n.9
Lührmann, D., 89,100, 361,405; 71, n.10; 82, n.3; 83, n.5; 84, n.9; 131, n.32; 139, n.46; 151, n.73-77; 219, n.46; 220, n.47; 236, n.74, 75; 411, n.22, 23, 26; 754
Luther, M., 64

Maatje, F., 362, n.59
Maccoby, M., 454, n.38
Macquard, O., 583, n.1
Maddox, R., 459, 468; 462, n.57; 470, n.71
Mainberger, G., 272
Malet, A., 662, n.13
Mánek, J., 219
Manson, T. W., 89, 98
Marchel, W., 256; 259, n.106, 107; 260, n.111, 113
Marcuse, H., 112
Marin, L., 330; 337, n.15; 362, n.59
Marrou, H., 77, n.2; 126, n.10; 562, n.4
Marshall, I. H., 459, 468; 471, n.72
Marshall, M., 662, n.13
Martin, R., 429
Martin-Achard, R., 518, n.1
Martyn, J. L., 77, n.2
Marxsen, W., 63, 107, 330,393, 394, 405, 459, 516; 59, n.4; 94, n.27; 311, n.102; 321, n.2; 333, n.6; 393, n.20; 419, n.38, 537, n.13
Masson, Ch., 320
McArthur, H. K., 89; 95, n.31
McCown, C, 126
McDermott, Br. O , 516; 341, n.23; 390, n.15
McKinnon, D. M., 516
Merlan, Ph., 560, n.2
Metz, J.-B., 180; 577, n.2; 621, n.12; 651, n.2
Meyendorff, J., 564, n.6
Meyer, E, 405
Meyer, H., 63
Meyer, R., 441
Michaelis, W., 321, n.2
Michiels, R., 596
Mildenberger, F., 526
Mitscherlich, A., 256
Möhler, B., 71, n.10
Moltmann, J., 596, 605; 652, n.3
Montefiore, A. W., 256
Moore, A., 516
Morgenthaler, R., 492; 492, n.9
Mosely, A. W., 77, n.2
Moule, C. F., 407, n.10
Müller, U. B., 116, 450, 459; 123, n.33; 343, n31; 452, n.31; 453, n.32; 460, n.56; 462, n.57, 58; 465, n.59-61; 466, n.62, 64; 471, n.73; 500, n.119; 534, n.3
Muschalek, G., 596

Muszner, Fr., 63, 107, 180, 298, 330, 516; 684, n 79; 187, n.8; 294, n.75; 296, n.81, 82; 338, n.16; 441, n.26

Nauck, W., 172, n90; 384, n.3
Néher, A., 441
Nélis, J., 518, n.1
Nestle, D., 236, n.74; 562, n.4
Neyrinck, F., 330; 339, n.18; 554, n.5
Nickelsburg, G., 394, 503, 510; 285, n.26; 287, n.45, 46; 290, n.59; 394, n.22; 471, n.73; 510, n.140; 418, n.1, 2; 519, n.3, 4; 520, n.5-7; 522, n.8; 523, n.9; 537, n.10
Niederstraszer, N., 564, n.6
Niederwimmer, K., 180; 97, n.43; 182, n.1
Nineham, D. E., 412, n.28
Nock, A. D., 43
Nolte, N., 583, n.1
Nötscher, F., 526

Oelmüller, W., 583, n.1; 593, n.10
Oepke, H., 524, n.14
Ogden, Sch., 628, n.1
Ohlig, K. H., 404, n.2
Orrieux, C, 256
Ott, H., 63
Otto, St., 564, n.6

Pannenberg, W., 141, 516, 596, 605, 613, 663; 31, n.10; 390, n.15; 554, n.5; 555, n.7; 560, n.2; 600, n.11; 643, n.2; 618, n.11
Pater, W. A. de, 180
Pedersen, J., 262, n.116
Pelletier, A., 330; 347, n.39
Perrin, N., 89, 93, 141, 155, 272, 405, 459, 467; 81, n.1; 92, n.19; 94, n.26; 95, 31; 417, n.37
Perrot, C, 524, n.14
Pesch, R., 89, 107, 180, 188, 200, 211, 227, 379, 517; 108, n.1; 151, n.75; 153, n.78; 184, n.3; 186, n.4-5; 187, n.8; 188, n.12; 210, n.31; 211,n.35; 212, n.37; 227, n.63; 426, n.52; 540, n.22; 554, n.5; 556, n.10
Pesch, W., 163, n.83
Petzke, G., 424
Philonenko, M., 224, n.57
Pittenger, N., 517
Plagnieux, J., 567, n.12
Ploeg, J. van der, 518, n.1
Plöger, O., 116
Pohier, J., 256
Pohlenz, M., 562, n.4
Pokorný, P., 256; 260, n.109; 551, n.22
Polag, A. P., 186, n.4; 187, n.8; 294, n.77; 476, n.77
Pollard, J. E., 560, n.2
Popkes, W., 272, 282; 290, n.59; 303, n.91; 531, n.36
Potterie, I. de la, 495, n.107
Pousset, E., 330; 345, n.34
Preiss, Th., 460
Prestige, G. L., 563, n.5

Rad, G. von, 116; 446, n..17
Rademacker, L.: 612
Rahner, K., 517, 596, 605; 577, n.2
Ranke, L., 67
Ratzinger, J., 596
Reicke, B., 43
Reimarus, S., 67
Reinhardt, Kl., 596
Rengsdorf, K., 219, 517; 183, n.2; 191, n.12; 320, n.18; 332, n.4
Reymond, P., 131, n.31
Richter, W., 89
Ricken, Fr., 60, n.7; 566, n.8, 10
Ricoeur, P., 48, 613-16; 258, n.104; 392, n.18; 613, n.1, 3; 614, n.5; 615, n.8-9
Riedel, M., 583, n.1
Riedl, J., 272; 554, n.5

Riesenfeld, H., 150, n.69
Rigaux, B., 200, 330, 517
Ringgren, H., 256; 259, n.107
Robinson, James M., 63, 86, 89, 517; 71, n.10; 82, n.18; 86, n.13; 91, n.17-19; 408, n.16; 412, n.28; 425, n.50; 428, n.55; 435, n.58
Robinson, John A. T., 405, 596, 599; 600, n.11-12; 604, n.30
Rohde, J., 517
Roloff, J., 63, 107, 180, 188, 200, 217, 230, 239, 243, 272, 282, 292, 303-4, 379, 424; 71, n.10; 81, n.1-2; 108, n.1; 109, n.6; 110, n.7-8; 134, n.37; 139, n.46; 188, n.10; 189, n.11; 195, n.15; 198, n.17; 199, n.19-20; 201, n.21; 205, n.22; 208, n.26; 216, n.45; 219, n.46; 239, n.80; 243, n.81; 243, n.82; 244, n.83-84; 245, n.86; 279, n.18; 291, n.63-4; 292,n.67; 293, n.68, 73; 296, n.80; 303, n.90-1; 304, n.94; 307, n.96; 384, n.3; 389, n.13-14; 409, n.17; 425, n.49; 426, n.51
Rössler, D., 116
Rostowtzeff (= Rostowzew), M., 43
Roth, C, 692, n 184
Rowley, H. H., 116
Ruppert, L., 286, 394, 503, 507, 510; 284, n.25; 285, n.6; 285, n.33, 37; 286, n.39-41; 287, n.43, 45; 288, n.7; 289, n.49, 52; 290, n.57, 60; 291, n.63; 293, n.72; 393, n.22; 457, n.49; 462, n.58; 471, n.73; 510, n.140; 518, n.2; 519, n.3; 532, n.37-8; 536, n.7; 537, n.10
Ryle, G., 662

Sanders, J. T., 429, 536; 536, n.8-9; 537, n.10-11
Schäfer, R., 256
Scharbert, J., 441
Schellong, D., 583, n.1
Schenke, L., 273, 330, 334; 321, n.2; 322, n.4; 332, n.4; 334, n3, 4
Scheuermann, P., 595
Schille, G., 89, 98, 100, 180, 219, 320, 331, 405; 82, n.3; 83, n.7; 84, n.9; 85, n.11; 98, n.44; 201, n.21; 222, n.53; 290, n.62; 331, n.3; 332, n.4; 350, n.43; 539, n.15
Schillebeeckx, E., 596; 577, n.2; 579, n.4; 597, n.2; 608, n.18; 617, n.10; 621, n.12; 632, n.3; 661, n.9
Schiller, J. C, 591
Schindler, A., 567, n.12
Schlette, H. R., 517
Schlier, H., 107, 330, 508, 517; 81, n.1; 108, n.3; 435, n.59; 507, n.133; 508, n.137
Schmauch, W., 529, n.32
Schmidt, J., 116
Schmidt, Kl., 141
Schmiedel, P. W., 93, n.25
Schmithals, N., 73, n.13
Schmitt, J., 330; 345, n.34
Schnackenburg, R., 107, 141, 219, 330; 109, n.6; 110, n.8, 10; 149, n.66; 209, n.28; 228, n.66; 524, n.14
Schneemelcher, W., 257
Schneider, G., 273, 320, 326, 450, 501; 326, n.17; 327, n.22-3; 340, n.21; 501, n.122-3; 506, n.130-1; 554, n.5; 555, n.8
Schneider, T., 405; 132, n.33; 662, n.13
Schniewind, J., 244; 224, n.84
Scholem, D., 450
Scholz, H., 583, n.1
Schoof, T. M., 596
Schoonenberg, P., 596, 597; 597, n.2-3; 598, n.20-24; 607, n.31; 653, n.4
Schrage, W., 273; 111, n.11
Schreibet, J., 273; 322, n.4
Schreiner, J., 116

Schrenk, G., 256
Schreurs, N., 392, n.18
Schrottroff, L., 200
Schubert, K., 450; 518, n.1
Schulz, Ans., 219, 225; 225, n.59
Schulz, S., 63, 95, 96, 100, 219, 220, 230, 234, 257, 405, 406, 417, 429; 71, n.10; 83, n.6, 8; 85, n.10; 94, n.28; 95, n.54; 96, n.41; 127, n.16; 131, n.31-32; 132, n.33; 139, n.46; 147, n.57, 58; 151, n.76; 173, n.91; 186, n.4-5; 187, n.8; 209, n.29; 219, n.46; 220, n.47; 220, n.49; 223, n.56; 228, n.64; 234, n.72; 236, n.75; 259, n.106; 260, n.110; 264, n.119; 265, n.120-121; 275, n.2; 294, n.75; 323, n.12; 396, n.28; 578, n.5; 579, n.10, 13, 15, 17-19, 21-4, 27-8; 413, n.29; 444, n.31; 445, n.32; 416, n.33; 476, n.77; 537, n.13; 539, n.18
Schürer, E., 43
Schürmann, H., 63, 89, 273, 304, 318, 596; 294, n.74; 296, n.80; 300, n.87; 301, n.89; 308, n.97-9; 554, n.5
Schurr, V., 662, n.13
Schutz, P., 345; n.62
Schwantes, H., 517
Schwanz, P., 564, n.6
Schwartz, S., 32, n.11
Schwarz, R., 583, n.1
Schweizer, E., 218, 257, 273, 394, 460, 468; 260, n.109; 284, n.25; 291, n.63; 535, n.4; 536, n.6-7; 537, n.10
Scobie, C, 126
Scroggs, R., 421, n.45
Seidensticker, Ph., 330; 321, n.2; 350, n.43; 393, n.19
Seiller, L., 667
Simon, M., 530, n.35
Sint, J., 126, 517
Sjöberg, E., 460
Slenczka, R., 583, n.1
Smith, C, 219
Smith, M., 454, n.38
Smulders, P., 569, n.15
Sölle, D., 596
Stanley, D. M., 361
Starcky, J., 450; 453, n.34; 454, n.35, 37
Steck, O., 116, 441, 494; 117, n.4; 127, n.17; 128, n.20; 175, n.92; 275 n.4-5, 7; 494, n.106; 496, n.111
Steinmann, J., 126
Stempel, W., 77, n.1
Stendahl, Kr., 518, n.1
Stierle, K., 77, n.1
Stockmeier, P., 563, n.5; 564, n.6
Strack (see Billerbeck)
Strauss, D. F., 70, 75, 440
Strawson, P. F., 662; 662, n.10-12
Strecker, G., 63, 89, 107, 273; 73, n.13; 197, n.16; 340, n.20
Strobel, A., 218
Stuhlmacher, P., 63, 90, 107, 186, 230; 81, n.1; 186, n.6; 416, n.34; 492, n.98; 494, n.101
Styler, G. M., 441
Suggs, J., 429
Suhl, A., 180; 526, n.22
Sykes, S. W., 596, 599, 600; 599, n.9-10

Tagawa, K., 184, n.3
Taylor, V., 273; 321, n.2
Teeple, H. M., 441, 460, 467, 470; 408, n.15; 460, n.56; 469, n.67; 470, n.69
Thomas, J., 116
Thüsing, W., 273, 405, 517, 596; 321, n.2; 396, n.29; 421, n.45; 537, n.13; 539, n.16
Thyen, H., 200
Ti1borg, S. van, 431, n.57
Tillich, P., 590, 605
Tödt, H.-E., 282, 405, 460, 469, 526; 151, n.73; 210, n.30; 238, n.78; 396,

n.28; 411, n.24, 26; 412, n.28; 413, n.30; 416, n.33; 420, n.41; 460, n.56; 469, n.64, 68; 357, n.13
Trilling, W., 90,126, 379; 93, n.24
Trocmé, E., 155, 160, 243; 82, n.4; 160, n.80; 184, n.3; 243, n.81; 246, n.88
Troeltsch, E., 38, n.14
Trompf, G. W., 331

Unnik, W. C. van, 450; 443, n.10

Vanhoye, A., 273
Vass, G., 577, n.2
Vergote, A., 257
Vermès, G., 480, n.83; 482, n.86
Via, Dan O., 155; 168, n.86
Vielhauer, Ph., 116, 126, 141, 406, 460, 467. 539; 396, n.29; 406, n.8; 411, n.21; 469, n.67; 500, n.119; 503, n.125; 537, n.13
Viering, F., 273
Vogt, H. J., 566, n.8
Vögtle, A., 63, 126, 141, 150, 180, 200, 273. 331, 379, 388; 71, n.10; 81, n.1; 118, n.6; 141, n.52; 144, n.53; 149, n.61, 63, 66; 150, n.70; 321, n.2; 358, n.54; 359, n.55, 421, n.28; 554, n.5
Volz, P., 518, n.1
Voss, G., 90, 450
Vriezen, Th. C, 450, n.29

Waard, J. de, 480, n.83
Wachtel, N., 614, n.6
Wagner, G., 345, n.35
Walker, N., 526
Ware, R. C, 517
Weber, H., 517
Weeden, Th. J., 107, 320, 324, 331, 406, 422, 539; 55, n.3; 77, n.2; 205, n.22; 321, n.2; 322, n.4; 323, n.10; 324, n.14; 334, n.7; 406, n.6; 417, n.35; 419, n.38, 39; 420, n.40, 42; 425. n.49-50; 539, n.14
Weima, J., 608, n.18
Weinrich, H., 77, n.1; 168, n.87; 362, n.59
Weiser, A., 155; 163, n.84; 165, n.85
Weisz, J., 321, n.2; 332, n.4
Welte, B., 577, n.2; 581, n.4
Wengst, Kl., 429
Westermann, C., 128, n.20; 526, n.22
Whitehead, A. N., 668, n.20
Wiederkehr, D., 596
Wijngaards, J., 526
Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, U. von, 562, n.4
Wilcke, H. A., 540, n.22
Wilckens, U., 107, 200, 331, 333, 429, 517; 71, n.10; 109, n.6; 132, n.33; 151, n.76; 207, n.25; 208, n.26; 289, n.52; 290, n.59; 333, n.6; 347, n.36; 350, n.43; 356, n.49; 510, n.141; 524, n.15-16; 534, n.3; 537, n.13
Wilcox, M., 320; 327, n.24
Wilder, A., 170; n.88
Wiles, M., 560, n.2; 566, n.9-10
Willems, B. A., 273
Wilson, J. H., 517; 540, n.22
Windisch, H., 361
Wink, W., 126
Wittgenstein, L., 581
Wolf, B. L., 48, n.2
Wolff, Chr., 583
Wolff, E., 141
Wolff, H. W., 116; 131, n.30; 175, n.92; 290, n.59
Woude, S. van der, 441; 455, n.39; 530, n.34
Wrede,W., 501, n.122
Wülfing von Martitz, P., 257
Würthwein, E., 131, n.30

Yadin, Y., 455, n.40
Ysebaert, J., 495, n.107

Zimmerli, N., 116
Zoelen, H. van, 28, n.8